

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR

CONFESSION

AND

COMMUNION.

Printed in the Year, 1730.



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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONFESSION:

GOD, who wills not the Death of a Sinner, but calls all to Repentance, has in the Sacrament of Penance mercifully provided all Christians of a Means, by which their Sins may be forgiven, and they again received into the Favour of their Heavenly Father, from whom they had been separated by their Offences. So that, whoever finds his Conscience burthen'd with the weight of his Crimes, and is conscious to himself of having provok'd the Anger of God, ought diligently to apply himself to this Holy expedient of Peace, and seek a Reconciliation in that manner as God has appointed and commanded it.

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4 Instructions &c.

But then his principal Care ought to be, not to be wanting in any part that God requires at his Hands, but sincerely to perform all that is exacted of him, with a Seriousness answerable to the Greatness of the Work he goes about, and a Diligence suitable to that Infinite Mercy, which is here offer'd him; ever remembring, that as it is *Mercy and Pardon* is promis'd, to those that sincerely do here the best they can, so there is nothing less than a Curse pronounc'd against all those that do this Work of God negligently.

It being therefore a matter of the most weighty concern, to perform this Duty well, I presume it will be a very acceptable Charity, to give some assistance in this Affair, and an encouragement to the poor Sinner, if I take him by the Hand and lead him through every part of this great Undertaking. But then he must give me leave, for clearness sake, and the Instruction of such as are ignorant, to lay down some Points by way of Question and Answer.

C H A P.

C H A P. . I.

*Of the Parts of the Sacrament
of Penance; and of the Ex-
amination of Conscience.*

Q. **H**OW many Parts has the Sacrament of Penance, as it regards the Penitent?

A. Three, viz. 1. *Contrition of Heart.*
2. *Confession of Mouth.* 3. *Satisfaction of Works.*

Q. What do you mean by these Three Parts?

A. I mean, That every Sinner that desires Pardon of his Sins, has Three things to do: First, He is to be heartily sorry for his Sins. 2^{dly}, He is to confess them. 3^{dly}, He is to perform what is enjoyn'd him, in Testimony of his sorrow, and to make some satisfaction to the Divine Justice for his Offences.

Q. What is the first thing you would have a Sinner do, that heartily desires to perform well this Duty, and to obtain Pardon of his sins? Where would you have him begin?

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6 Of the Examen

A. I would advise him to retire in private, and raising up his Heart to Heaven, make his Protestation to Almighty God, that what he's going about, is sincerely for the Honour of his Holy Name, and the discharging his Soul from the Guilt of his Offences, and for this end, that he desires his Assistance; which he may do after this manner.

A Protestation before the Examen of Conscience.

O God, the Searcher of Hearts, behold I here protest in thy presence, that what I now design, is sincerely for the honour of thy Name: And because I heartily desire to be delivered from the Guilt of my Sins, therefore I come to this Sacrament of Penance, that complying with thy holy Institution, I may obtain thy Blessing and Pardon, as thou hast promised: May thy Holy Grace assist me for the performing this Great Duty well, as it is thy Mercy that has called me to it.

Q. After this how must he go on?

A. I would have him then prepare for the first part of this Sacrament, viz. *Contrition*. And because a Sinner cannot well have

of Conscience.

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have that true and particular Sorrow for his sins, unless he first knows what his Sins are; therefore the first thing he has to do, after having made this Protestation, is to apply himself to the *Examination of Conscience*, and enquire into the state of his Soul, that so he may discover the Particulars in which he has offended God, and for which he now designs to beg Pardon, and conceive that true Sorrow, as may be available for that end.

Q. What Directions do you give him for the making this Examen well?

A. I would have him begin it with Prayer: For as the *seeing our own Failings* is a point of great concern, so 'tis of great difficulty too, and if he has not the light of God's Grace to direct him in this search, I fear he will deceive himself, and be subject to many Delusions; sometimes stick at Niceties for great Sins, and other times overlook his greatest Sins, as if they were none at all. Man is very blind in this Affair, and there's no Remedy for this Blindness but the Light of heaven; and 'tis nothing less than a Presumption, to begin this Examen, till he has first implor'd Help and Direction from above, which he may do thus,

A Prayer before Examination of Conscience.

I AM truly sensible, O God, that I have many ways offended thy Divine Majesty, and provok'd thy wrath by my sins; and that, if I obtain not pardon, I shall be cast out of thy sight for ever. I desire therefore at present to call my self to an account, and look into all the sins whereby I have displeased thee: But, O God, how miserably shall I deceive my self, if thou assist me not in this Work, by thy Heavenly Light! Give me therefore at present, thy Grace, whereby I may discover all my Imperfections, see all my Failings, and duly call to mind all my Sins: for I know nothing is hid from thy sight: But as for me, I confess I am in the dark to my self; my Passions blind me, self-love flatters me, Presumption deludes me: and though I have many sins, which look me in the Face and cannot be hid, yet how many too are there quite hid from me! But discover even these to me, O my Lord, enlighten this my Darkness, cure my Blindness, and remove every Veil that hides my sins from me, that so I may be no longer a secret to my self, not a stranger to my own failings; that I may never flatter my self with the Thoughts
of

Of Conscience?

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of having repented, and at the same time nourish Folly and Vice within my own Breast. Come Holy Ghost, and by a Beam of thy Divine Light open my Understanding, that I may have a full view of all my sins and imperfections, and thus knowing my self, and sincerely repenting of all my Offences, I may know thee, and be received again into thy Favour,

Having thus beg'd the Divine Assistance, he is seriously to turn all his thoughts to the making the Examination of his Conscience, that is, truly to consider, that if he were within a few hours to appear before the Judgment Seat of God, what are the Sins he apprehends would then rise up against him, and wish he had never committed: These very Sins ought he now to call to mind, so to prevent the severity of that last Judgment, upon the assurances that if he judges himself, he shall not be judg'd.

Q. Have you not a Method to propose to him, for the avoiding Confusion in his Examination?

A. I would have him take notice, that there are two sorts of sins, some that are committed *willingly, knowingly, and deliberately*, and in a matter of Concern, and are called *Mortal Sins*: Others that are in

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a matter of *lesser moment*, or at least, done *without full Consent or Knowledge* of the evil, and are called *Venial*. Now, according to these two sorts of Sins, I would have him order the Method of his Examen; that is, first see whether he be guilty of any *wilful* and *weighty* Transgressions, whereby he has *mortally* offended, and call to mind what in *particular* they are: And then make enquiry into his *Venial* Sins, and under these two Heads rank all his offences.

Q. But if the time he has to look over be of some Years, and the Sins should be many; is there no help of Memory, whereby he may bring and retain them in his Mind?

A. The Method commonly observ'd for the recalling into his Mind the Sins of Years past, is to consider all the *Places* he has liv'd in, the *Persons* he has conversed with, the *Business* he has been concerned in, the *Obligations* of his State, the *Passions* he has been most subject to, the *Occasions* he has met with. Or else, if according to the *Threefold Duty* every Christian has to God, his Neighbour and Himself, he will in order consider every one of these Duties, and reflect in what particulars he has offended against them, either by *Commission* or *Omission*; this Order

of Conscience

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der may be something helpful to his Memory.

Q. But if his Sins should be many, he may still forget some, and is there no Remedy?

A. He may take the *Commandments* and examine himself by them in order, as likewise the *Precepts of the Church*, and the *Seven deadly Sins*, and make his Examination upon every one by it self, whether he has transgressed against it, in what, and how; and though his Sins should be many, yet being thus brought under different Heads, he may the more easily remember them. And this Order will not be improper, even when he makes his Confession, accusing himself in the first place of all his Sins against the *First Commandment*, then of those against the *Second*, and so on.

Q. May he not write them down for Memory sake?

A. In *General Confessions* and the *Examinations of several Years*, this is a very good way; but in *Ordinary Confessions*, especially in those that frequent this Sacrament often, this is not allowable, without the Advice of the Director, it being apt to breed Scruples, and produce too great an anxiety of spirit, which is ever an hindrance in this Work.

Q. How

Q. How much time would you advise him to take for making this Examination ?

A. There can be no general Rule prescrib'd for this ; but every one must do in this as in all other affairs ; that is, take the Time, according to the Work they have to do. A Week's Examination requires not so much time as a *Months* ; nor a *Months* as a *Years* ; nor a *Years* so much as that of a *whole Life* : So that every one is to consider his own Circumstances, and according to his Capacity, Variety of Life, and other particulars, is to take so much time as is necessary for the well doing a Work of so great a concern as this is. Now, as for those who have many years to look back, and prepare for a general Confession ; I think 'tis necessary, they should not so much as endeavour to do this all at once, but rather at several times so to give Relief to their spirits ; for as too long an Application dulls, so convenient Interruptions prepare the Thoughts for a more diligent search and attention, and discharging their Duty better.

But then for such as go to Confession every week or ten days, who take care to avoid all wilful and mortal Sins, whose Life is almost all of a piece, that is, every day

day the same, I would advise them not to be over-tedious in making their Examination, especially if they be of a *solicitous* and *anxious* Temper, for these are often deceived, disquieting their Minds with long and scrupulous searches, and at the same time flattering themselves as if they were doing a great Duty, when God knows, they are all the while yielding to their own Weakness, and led along by a blind Fear and Infirmary of Temper.

Q. Would you not have them be very earnest in an Affair of this concern?

A. But not with an Earnestness that destroys all Care. This Work ought to be done with a serene and quiet Mind; for whilst it is thus, it is much more *discerning* and *quick* in discovering all Imperfections: But if once it is disquieted and perplex'd, it is no longer fit for going on with this Duty; and therefore I cannot but look on this *Solicitude*, as a Temptation and Snare of the Enemy; and whoever indulges and follows it, is certainly led by a wrong Guide, and goes out of the way. But let not the careless Christian here mistake me, as if his sloth were here favour'd, in making his *Examen* without any concern at all.

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Q. 'Twill be very difficult to avoid this Solicitude; if we are obliged to confess all our *Venial Sins*, because they are so many, and mix'd even with our best Actions: Pray tell me therefore, are we bound to call to mind and confess all our *Venial Sins*?

A. The Church obliges us to confess only our *Mortal Sins*: But as to such as are *Venial*, She lays no such obligation, but only declares it to be profitable and convenient to do it; this being the most assured means to obtain Grace for their amendment. But then there is a great difference in these *Venial Sins*, and more reason to confess some of them than others; and whoever observes this Difference, may easily avoid *Solicitude*, both in making their Examination and Confession.

Q. What is this Difference? and what are those *Venial Sins* there is more reason to confess than others?

A. All *Venial Sins* that are *Habitual*, that is to say, If any one observes in himself an ill *Habit* or *Custom* in any sort of *Venial Sin* whatever; I would advise him to confess it, because tho' it may be light in it self, yet being multiplied and neglected, it becomes very dangerous; For how many fall miserably into *Mortal Sins*,

Sins, the beginning whereof was only their neglect in correcting *Venial Sins*: Now as to the discovering this sort of *Venial Sins*, there needs be no solicitude at all in making the Examen, it being very hard to have an ill Custom of falling into any kind of such offences, and not to be sensible of it upon a very short Reflection.

Now, as to all other *Venial Sins*, there may be reckon'd Three sorts: 1. Such as proceed from *Weakness*. 2dly, Such as are committed by *Inadvertency* or *Surprize*. 3dly, Such as we fall into on purpose, or by an *affected* or *wilful Negligence*, so that we take no care to amend them; or else proceed from some *Tye* or *Irregular Affection* we bear to some Creature. Now, as to this last sort, which we fall into on purpose, and depends much on our own Will, 'tis very reasonable to make Enquiry into them, see what they are, and confess them, because the Good of our Soul has a great dependance on their amendment. But as to the two former sorts, which proceed from *Weakness* and *Surprize*, though it ought to be our Care to avoid them as much as we can, yet they are so many and hidden, that whoever goes about to examine and call them all to mind, must necessarily be perplexed with

with great Solitude, whilst they indiscreetly put themselves on a Work which is not in their power to do. And therefore, tho' it may be very proper to reflect on them at times, from such a view of our Misery and Weakness, to humble our selves in the sight of God, and seriously to labour to amend them, yet to think of *Confessing them all*, is certainly to engage in a Work which will be a hindrance, and not a help to Virtue.

Hence you may see what Sins you ought to examine into, in order to Confession. 1. *All Mortal Sin*; and these are of obligation, 2dly, Such *Venial Sins* as you have any ill *Custom* of falling into. 3dly, Such *Venial Sins* as you commit *on purpose*, or through *wilful neglect*. And these two last sorts I advise you to examine into, and confess, as a proper means for your improvement in Virtue and Goodness. And whilst all these three kinds of Sin are discover'd with ease, by those who have any Care and Watch over their Souls, I think this Duty may be performed, without all that Anxiety and Trouble which some give themselves, thro' their own Infirmary and Indiscretion.

Q. I understand you, and hope it may, But there is one thing still, which seems to

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to me difficult, and I fear will occasion some Confusion or Disturbance; and that is, the Examining and Confessing Sins of Thought: Pray what Directions can you give me as to these?

A. 'Tis true, *Sins of Thought* ought to be confess'd; for God, who is the *Searcher of Hearts*, sees and knows all our most hidden Thoughts, and will call us to an account for all that are evil; if we discharge not our selves from them by Penance. And therefore you may be assur'd, that whatsoever is so evil, that it is a Sin in *Word* to speak it, in *Deed* to do it; is likewise a Sin in *Thought* to think of it: especially if we entertain such Thoughts *willingly and knowingly*?

Q. Then all *Evil Thoughts* are not Sins, except we entertain them *willingly and knowingly*?

A. No Thoughts of Evil can be mortal Sins, except we entertain them with *Reflection*, and make them *Ours*, by the Act of our *own Will*. And therefore a Person preparing himself for Confession, is not to enquire, how many *Evil Thoughts* he has had in his Mind; but *how many* he has given way to, and admitted *willingly and knowingly*, without endeavouring to remove and cast them off: And as many as he finds of these, so many Sins he has to repent of.

of, which are Mortal, if the thing he thought of, be in it self very considerable or Mortal; otherwise they are but Venial.

Q. What Account then is one to make of such other Evil Thoughts, which he gives no way to, but strives to cast them out of his Mind?

A. These are so many *Temptations* or *Trials*, for the exercise and improvement of *Virtue*; and therefore whoever, upon Examination, finds he has been often and violently assaulted with Evil Thoughts, tho' five hundred times, and has as often withstood them, and put them by, needs not make these a matter of Confession, or be troubled on this account, as if they were Sins; but rather rejoyce, and give Thanks for so many Victories obtain'd of the Enemy; for which he may hope one day to receive a Crown of Glory. *Blessed is the Man that endures Temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive a Crown of Life, Jam. I. 12.*

Q. This is some Comfort. But tell me, Is there no difference in Sins of Thought, besides what you have already mention'd?

A. There may be Three degrees in these Sins: As first a *Complacence* or *Satisfaction* in an Evil Thought. 2dly, A *Desire* of doing

doing the Evil. 3dly, A Resolution to do it. Which are all Sins, one greater than the other, but the last the greater, tho' it be never put in execution.

Q. I understand these Points. And now 'tis time to let me see something of that Method, by which the Examination of Conscience may be made, in Order, and without Confusion ?

A. The Method of the Examination of Conscience, I'll set down at the end of these Instructions, where you may see it at length. And for the present, we'll suppose the Penitent has duly made his Examination, and see what he has to do next.

C H A P. II.

Of the first Part of the Sacrament of Penance ; viz. Contrition.

Q. WHEN one has duly Examined himself, and now called to mind all he has to Confess, may he not go immediately to Confession ; or has he any thing else to do first ?

A. He ought not to go immediately to Confession, as being yet but half prepar'd, and that the lesser half too ; for tho' he has truly examin'd his Conscience, and remembers all he has to confess : He ought still to take time to beg Pardon for his Sins, stir up in his Heart a true Sorrow and Contrition for his Offences, and make firm Resolutions of amendment for the time to come : And without this, what benefit can he receive by Confession ; which will be nothing but a fruitless Ceremony, if it be not accompanied with a change of the Heart, a Detestation of Sin, and sincere purposes of Amendment ?

Q. How

Q. How much time ought one to take for the stirring up this Sorrow, and resolving upon Amendment?

A. This Sorrow and Resolutions of Amendment are so absolutely necessary, and likewise so difficult, that, I think, a man ought to take as much time for these, as he does for the Examination of his Conscience. *Alp. Rodericus*, a great Master in spirituals, goes yet farther, and requires double the time for this, as is taken for the Examination: So that if the whole time, necessary for preparing for Confession, were divided into Three parts; he would have the First part be spent in making the Examen, and the two others employ'd in begging Pardon, stirring up true sorrow and making Resolutions of offending no more: And this Method he recommends very pressingly, as apprehending too many to be much wanting in it: And however, most People are very scrupulous in making their Examen, and often solicitous about it, even to a Fault, as thinking there's no danger of their Confession being invalid and fruitless, unless it be for want of Examining; this Author is of another mind, and fears there are more Confessions imperfect, sacrilegious, and null, for want of true sorrow and sincere purposes of Amendment, than
upon

upon any other account whatever, P. 1.
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Q. What then would you advise a Penitent to do in this Case?

A. Having made his Examination, I would have him by no means think himself upon this, fit and ready to go to Confession, but take time wholly to apply himself after this, to the change of his Heart, by *exciting* it to true Sorrow and Contrition, and resolving seriously upon an Amendment.

Q. In what manner is he to do this?

A. He ought to begin it with Prayer; for however People may be *naturally* troubled, and in some Disquiet, upon their preparing for Confession, yet that *True Sorrow* and *Contrition*, which is a necessary part of this Sacrament, is not a *Natural Trouble*, but most certainly a *Gift of God*, and not to be obtain'd but by Prayer, and solliciting Heaven for the receiving this Grace. And therefore, if there be any, who, as soon as they have finish'd their Examen, forthwith run to Confession, I fear they either wholly neglect this part of this Sacrament, *viz.* *Contrition*, or else seem to tempt God, in rashly expecting so great a Grace as *Contrition* is, without asking it, or using any Endeavours for it.

Q. What

Q. What Prayers are proper for the asking and obtaining of God the Grace of *True Contrition*?

A. Such as are prescrib'd in Prayer-Books, as Preparations for Confession, some of the chief gathered out of the most approv'd Books of Devotion; I'll here set down for your Benefit, as likewise a short form of Petitioning for this Gift of Contrition, which you may say before the other Prayers.

A short PRAYER for obtaining Contrition.

I Have now here before me, O Lord, a sad Prospect of the manifold Offences, by which I have displeased thy Divine Majesty, and which, I am assur'd, will appear in judgment against me, if I repent not, and by a hearty sorrow, my Soul be not prepar'd to receive thy Pardon. But this sorrow, O Lord, this Repentance must be thy free Gift, and if it comes not from the Hand of thy Mercy, all my Endeavours will be in vain, and I shall be for ever miserable. Have mercy therefore on me, O Father of all Goodness, and pour forth into my Heart thy Grace, whereby I may sincerely repent of all my Sins; give me a *True Contrition*, that I may bewail my own *Misery*

fery and Ingratitude, and grieve from my Heart for having offended Thee, so Good a God : Permit me not to be deluded with a false sorrow, as I fear I have been too often, through my own Weakness and Neglect ; but let it be now thy Gift, descending from Thee, the Father of Lights, that so my Repentance may be accompanied with Amendment and a Change of Life, and I be thus acquitted from the Guilt of my Sins, and once more received into the number of thy Servants, *Amen.*

Then let the Penitent apply himself seriously to other Prayers and Considerations, as may be proper for the obtaining this Contrition of Heart, that so, while he asks it of God, nothing of his own Endeavours may be wanting on his part.

PRAYERS before Confession.

HAve pity on me, my God, and let me partake of the Effects of thy great Mercy. I acknowledge and here confess the Evil I have done, and am sensible of the Grievousness of my Sins. Thou art he, my God, whom I have offended, against whom I have rebelled,

Prayers before Confession. 25

belled, ungrateful and perfidious Creature as I am! I have abandon'd Thee to follow my Pleasures, and Passions; for these have I lost thy Grace; and I, who have been created to thy Likeness, and redeem'd by the Blood of thy only Son, by my sins have made my Soul like those Monsters of Ingratitude, even the infernal Spirits; thus have I lost Heaven, my Blessed Country, and deserv'd Hell and Damnation, which I shall never be able to escape, without the assistance of thy great Mercy. But above all, I have infinitely offended thy Bounty; the injury I have offer'd is so great, that it caus'd thy Son Jesus Christ, my Saviour to suffer Death. O my God! How can I worthily deplore so great an Evil! Who will give Water to my Head, and a Fountain of Tears to my Eyes, that Night and Day I may deplore my Misery and Malice, and do Penance for my Sins.

Almighty and Eternal God, to whom is due all Honour and Glory: Behold, I a miserable and unworthy Sinner, who have hitherto liv'd in Ingratitude and Rebellion, come to Thee my Creator, my God, my Redeemer, my Merciful Judge, and my Saviour, accusing my self, and laying before Thee

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26 *Prayers before Confession.*

all my Abominations, by which I have blasphemed thy most Holy Name, transgressed thy Precepts, contemn'd thy Will, and defil'd both my Soul and Body. O God, when I behold this my Misery, and consider how often I have abus'd thy Gifts and Blessings, despis'd thy Goodness, neglected thy Service, added daily Sins to Sins, and preferr'd my self, my Passions, and other Creatures, before my Duty and thy Commands; I cannot but condemn my self, as unworthy to lift up my Eyes to Heaven, or appear in thy Presence: But whither shall I fly from thy Face, O Lord my God? Where shall I hide my self from thy Anger? Is there any that can make my Peace for me? 'Tis only from thy Goodness I can expect this Blessing: For, art not thou my Father, whose Mercies are infinite, whose Compassion knows no Bounds? And I, though unworthy of the Name of thy Child, acknowledge no other Father but Thee, my God. Wherefore I make haste to the Feet of thy Mercy, and there prostrate, beseech thee, by thy Almighty Power, by thy Wisdom, by thy Goodness, to pardon, purify, and discharge me from the Guilt of all my Sins. Receive me again into thy Favour, and by thy Grace confirm me in all Good, that my Soul may be entirely possessed

Prayers before Confession: 27

possessed by thee, and thus prepared for Glory. And that my Petition may find acceptance, I appeal to thee, sweet Jesu, Son of the living God, who hast been pleas'd to take upon Thee, to be Advocate and Mediator betwixt us Sinners, and thy Eternal Father ; humbly beseeching Thee, by that Infinite Charity which brought Thee from Heaven, to the ignominy of the Cross, and by thy precious Blood, which was there spilt, that I may here partake of the benefit of thy Sufferings, and be cleansed from all my Offences ; that, by thy assistance I may sincerely repent and amend all my Failings, that thus dying to my self and the World, I may live only to Thee, and never suffer either Passion or Pleasure to divide me from thee any more.

A Las my God, how is it that I have so often offended against thee, my Father ! thou seest, Lord, there's neither Goodness or Health in me ; have mercy therefore on me, and heal my Soul, because I have sinned against Thee. Heal me, O Lord, and then I shall be made whole ; save me, and then I shall be secure ; for in Thee only is my Hope and my Strength, Alas, my Lord God, how many and dangerous are my Wounds,

28 *Prayers before Confession.*

how great is my Weakness and Misery, for the curing of which thou wast crucified and slain ! And to whom shall I complain of all these my Evils, that are against me, but to thee, Lord, the Saviour and Redeemer of my Soul ? Be merciful therefore to me a Sinner : Jesu, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, for nothing is more pleasing to Thee, than to have compassion on those that are miserable. Restore me to thy Favour, receive me again into thy Friendship, and cast me not off for my Offences ; for what can I miserable Creature do but offend ? And what canst thou, O Infinite Goodness, do, but have Mercy and Spare ? Spare me therefore, according to thy great Goodness, and give me now Tears of Repentance, that I may mourn for the Evils I have committed ; give me time and sincere Contrition, that I may heartily grieve for having sin'd against Thee, my God, my Creator and Redeemer. Soften this my hardned Breast, enflame my frozen Heart, that I may with sorrow repent, for not loving, nay, for despising, for offending thee, my Lord. What shall I do, O God, to serve thee, who am so miserable and full of Iniquity ! I see no hopes of Amendment, whilst I behold my self, all my Trust and Confidence must be in Thee ;

Prayers before Confession. 29

Thee; Help me therefore, O Lord, and be thou the strength of my Soul, that I may now detest and forsake all my past Evils; that I may master my Passions, reform all my ill Customs, and by a true change of Life and Manners, be entirely united to Thee, and by Thee live for Ever. *Amen.*

TO thee, O merciful Jesu, in the bitterness of my Soul I come, beseeching thee to have compassion on me, and deliver me from my Sins. Despise not, O God, the Cries of this lost Sheep, reject not the Sighs of this prodigal Child, who desires now to return home to Thee, and be received again into the Number of thy Servants. I am sorry for all the Sins I have committed against thee; I detest them all here in thy Presence, because I love thee above all things, and honour thee as my God, worthy of infinite Love. And for this Reason, I now firmly purpose to suffer all Evils, and even Death it self, rather than wilfully consent to Sin; I resolve to make an exact Confession of my Offences, faithfully to discharge whatever shall be enjoyn'd for my Punishment or Amendment, and carefully to avoid all occasions of Sin. And if any thing be wanting of True Contrition in

30 *Prayers before Confession.*

this my Sorrow, may thy sacred Passion, O Blessed Jesu, thy precious Blood and infinite Merits, supply all the defects of my Weakness; for 'tis in thy Death I put all my Trust; through thee I firmly hope to obtain Pardon of all my Sins, and Grace to overcome my vicious customs, and persevere to the end in these good Resolutions I have here made before Thee: As therefore it is by Thee I come to the Knowledge of my Misery; so by Thee my good Purposes and Sorrow for my Offences, must be perfected. May the Fire therefore of Divine Love now enflame my Soul, and consume in me whatever is there displeasing to thy infinite Goodness, Sanctifie my Heart, purifie my Affections and Desires, that dying to my self, I may ever live to thee, and depart, at length, in thy Grace.

Amen.

Such

*Such as go to Confession over-
night, or otherwise have
time, may use the follow-
ing Aspirations, either be-
fore or after Confession,
and with benefit to their
Souls, if they consider and
pause on them as they go.*

I.

MY Lord and my God, I am a most
vile Sinner, and unworthy to
appear before Thee, but have Mer-
cy on me, and save me.

O God, my chiefest Good, how far have
I gone from thee by my Sins? how have
I dwelt at a distance from Thee, in the
Region of Misery, where I had quite lost
my self?

Most loving Father, I have sin'd against
Heaven, and before thee, and am not
worthy to be call'd thy Child, make me
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as one of thy Servants, and may I for the future be ever faithful to thee.

It grieves me, O God, that I have sin'd against thee; I am heartily sorry for the many times I have Transgressed thy Law: But wash me now from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my Sin.

I detest now my Sins, O Lord, and abhor all my wickedness: I confess my Ingratitude, and seek refuge in thy Mercy.

Wash me, Dear Jesu, with thy Blood, and purify my Heart from all the filth of Sin; Heal my Soul that lyes maim'd and wounded, and despise me not tho' unworthy.

From this moment I purpose no more to offend against thy Precepts, nor consent to Sin: Rather let me suffer pain and infamy, and Death, than return to my former wickedness, and live thy Enemy.

Loving Father, assist me by thy Grace, that I may bring forth worthy Fruits of Repentance, and not suffer my Sins to go unpunish'd,

I have wander'd like a sheep that's gone astray; but I hear thy sweet Voice crying after me; Thou hast gone after many Lovers; but return to me, and I will receive thee yet again.

II.

Now I begin, O Lord, now I begin to live, not trusting in my own Strength, or in the Resolution I make, but in the multitude of thy Mercies. O God, perfect now thy work thou hast begun in me.

Thou hast given me understanding and Grace, but I, wretched sinner, as I am, how have I ungratefully abus'd all thy Gifts! And yet now with all the tenderness of a loving Father, thou recallest me from Sin, and rescuest me from Hell.

My Soul is full of anguish and confusion at the thoughts of my many Sins, whereby I have offended thee my merciful Redeemer; made my self a slave to the Devil, and provok'd thy Anger against me.

O that I had never transgress'd thy Commandments, nor fallen into so great misery and calamity! O that I had never sin'd! Happy those Souls, who have preserv'd their Innocence, and never lost that Grace they receiv'd at the Font.

Now I resolve, with thy help, to be more watchful of my self, to amend my Failings and fulfil thy Law.

Look on me with the Eyes of Mercy, and blot out all my Sins; forgive me what is past, and thro' the bowels of thy infinite

nite

nite Goodness, secure me by thy most efficacious Grace, against all my wonted Failings for the time come,

How slothful and careless have I hitherto been! I have deferr'd my Repentance, rejected thy Helps, contemn'd thy Visits, been deaf to thy Calls: And now, Lord, what shall I do? It grieves me that I have offended thee: have mercy on me.

Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner: Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy on me.

Sovereign Lord of my Life, behold thou see'st there is nothing Good in me, nor Health in my Soul: I am miserable and blind, and without thee, O God, I can do nothing.

III.

My Sins exceed in Number the Sands of the Sea, and I am most unworthy, I confess, O Lord, of all thy Mercies: But thy Goodness however is above all my Offences.

Thou hast said, Lord, there is joy in Heaven for one Sinner that does Penance. Give me now grace truly to repent, and let Heaven rejoice in my Amendment.

Is it not thou, my God, who wilt not the Death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live? Give then that spiritual
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Life, which I want ; for, behold, O my Lord, I sincerely desire to live.

Thou can'st, my Redeemer, not to call the Just, but sinners to Repentance : Behold here a miserable Sinner before thee, draw him powerfully to thee.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy ; and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity.

Sprinkle me with thy Blood, and I shall be made whiter than Snow.

Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within my Bowels.

Dear Redeemer of my Soul, how long turnest thou thy face away from me, and bringest thou no relief to my sorrows.

Behold the Prodigal Child, nay worse than the Prodigal : Have compassion on me, Father, clothe me with thy grace, and receive me into the arms of thy mercy.

Let not thy Blood be spilt in vain, my Dear Saviour, but now may it bring forth in me the fruit of a sincere Repentance, and open me a way to life everlasting.

IV.

How great is thy goodness, Lord, who hast so long spar'd this unworthy sinner, and with so much patience waited for his Amendment ?

What

What return shall I make for this thy infinite mercy ! But ask this one mercy to be added to the rest, that I may never offend thee more.

This one thing I earnestly beg of thee : hear me, Lord, and may I for the future ever renounce my own ways to follow thine.

Come, Lord, into my heart, and cast out from thence whatever thou knowest profanes or defiles that thy Temple.

Destroy and root out all that is displeasing to thee ; and lay in me the foundation of a New Life.

I confess, I have sinned ; but if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole. Heal, most loving Father, this my Soul.

O that I were free from all Vice ; that I could regulate my Senses, govern my Thoughts, and moderate my Affections ! O that I were truly compos'd, and orderly both within and without ! But when shall I be thus happy, when thus pure in thy sight ! Lord, I will labour, and take pains to reform my self, and I beg thy assistance for this Work : But, if I find not that good effect as I desire, I will still go on in my Duty, and wait with patience and humility, till thou shalt please to give a Blessing to my endeavours : Help me, O Lord my God, and have Compassion on this sinful Soul.

Besides

Besides these or the like Prayers, those who have Capacity and Parts, may do well to stir themselves up to Contrition, by a serious Consideration of the many Enormities and indignities of Sin. 1. As it is a Rebellion against God. 2. A detestable ingratitude. 3. A Contempt of his Holy Will, and the preferring our own Will before the Will of God. 4. As it is an horrid Offence and Injury against God, for which no pure Creature, either Man or Angel, can make satisfaction. 5. As to the dreadful effects of Sin in Heaven, in Earth, and Hell, in Angels, in Man, nay, even in God himself, whilst 'twas for this the Son of God became Man, and suffer'd the Death of the Cross. Who then can worthily deplore so great an Evil.

Q. When a Penitent has gone thus far, and has now reason to hope that he is truly sorry for his Sins, and detest them, may he then go to Confession?

A. He ought not to forget his *Purposes* and *Resolutions of Amendment*; and for this end consider, what Pains, how strict a Watch, how great diligence is necessary for this Work; as likewise reflect on all the *Occasions* of his Sins, and resolve effectually to avoid them; for 'tis a Rashness

to undertake and resolve on a Work, unless he likewise considers of the Means and Ways, by which, it is to be effected. And having seriously done this, he may then go to Confession.

C H A P. III.

Of the Second Part of the Sacrament of Penance, viz. Confession.

Q. **A**R E there any particular Directions you would have the Penitent observe in Relation to this part of the Sacrament?

A There are some set down by St. Francis Sales, in his *Introduction*, which he ought to remember; as first, That he make not up his Confession with *Negatives* or *General Failings*, as some do of custom, saying, *I have not lov'd God as I ought, I have not pray'd with so much Devotion as I ought: I have not been so Patient as I ought: For in these general Accusations there's no particular Sin mentioned; nor any thing by which*
the

the Confessor can possibly understand the state of the Penitent's Conscience, since all Men on Earth might say the same. And therefore,

2dly, That he enquire what particular cause he has to make these General Accusations ; and having discover'd where the *Fault* is, to accuse himself of it in particular : So that instead of accusing himself of *not having pray'd with so much Devotion as he ought*, let him see whether his Fault was in admitting voluntary Distractions ; in not chusing a convenient Place, Time, &c. and as he shall find himself faulty, so let him accuse himself.

3dly, That he explain the *Motive*, or *Occasion* of his Sins, where it may be ; and therefore, in the case of *Untruths*, for example, That he accuse himself not only of *Lying*, but likewise declare, whether it was for *Vanity*, for *Excuse*, for the *doing a Prejudice*, &c. and so in other Sins ; for by this means he clearly lays open the state of his Soul ; and the Confessor knows how to prescribe proper Remedies for his Sins.

4thly, That in all Mortal Sins he discover the *Number*, that is, *how often* he has fallen into each sort of Sin ; for without this the Confessor can make no Judgment of the state of his Soul, there being

a great difference betwixt committing a Sin *Twice* or *Thrice*, and *Twenty* or *Thirty* times. And if a Person cannot exactly recollect himself as to the *Number*, let him upon due reflection, make the best guess he can, and sincerely lay it open in Confession, as near to Truth as he is able. But if it be so, that the Penitent has liv'd in a Sinful state for any Space of time, and frequently fallen into any particular Sin, he needs not then think of mentioning the *Number* of his Offences, but rather the *length of Time*, in which he has liv'd in that sinful state. As if a *Highway-man* should repent, that has liv'd many Years in the Practice of that Sin, it would be impossible for him to call to mind the *Number* of his Crimes; and therefore the surest way of letting his Confessor see the state of his Conscience, will be, to declare *how many Years* he has liv'd in that sinful Practice. And so likewise of those who have liv'd in any other Sin.

5thly, That he explain such *Circumstances* as change the Species or Nature of the Sin, or at least considerably aggravate it: And therefore, because there's a great difference betwixt robbing a *Church* and another place, betwixt cheating or stealing *Five Shillings* and *Five Hundred Pounds*, betwixt

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Of Confession.

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a married Person and single, in sins of Impurity ; betwixt defaming a Neighbour out of Malice, and by Heedlesness ; in a matter of little or great concern ; betwixt Quarrelling with a Stranger and a Father ; betwixt remaining in a Sin, as of Anger, Revenge, &c. a quarter of an hour, five hours, a day, a week, a year ; Therefore ought the Penitent in Confession, to explicate these Circumstances as distinctly as he can ; and if he, willingly and on purpose, conceals them, he makes his Confession void, by not sincerely laying open the Guilt and State of his Soul.

6thly, That he however avoid the relation of other Circumstances, which are impertinent to the Sins he confesses, and wholly unnecessary at that time.

7thly, That he be careful not to declare the Fault of any Third Person ; for tho' he does well to confess his own Sins, yet he ought to accuse no body else.

8thly, That he fail not to make an entire Confession ; that is, that he exactly confess all the Mortal Sins, which upon a due Examination he can call to mind ; be they never so secret or infamous ; be they in Thought, Word, or in Action ; because he that willingly conceals any one Mortal Sin, either through Shame or Malice, makes his whole Confession void,

and is guilty of Sacrilege, by abusing this Sacrament, and lying to the Holy Ghost.

Q. I understand these Directions, and think them necessary to be observ'd; but when I consider how difficult it is to our Nature, to acknowledge and confess our own secret and hidden Faults, I cannot but think, many Penitents, through shame, delay going to Confession, and when they go, are tempted to make imperfect and Sacrilegious Confessions. And what will you say to one that lyes under this Temptation?

A. I own Nature enclines this way, but 'tis a *Corrupt Nature*, such as not only in this case, but every where, and at all times, is averse to the Commands of God, and whoever yields to it in this point, must needs be tax'd with a great Weakness, with indiscretion and folly; for if he considers the thing aright, I think he has no reason to be asham'd, because, tho' there be shame in the *Sin*, yet there's no reason to be asham'd of the *Repentance* and *Amendment* of the Sin. Now when a Man goes to Confession, 'tis to manifest his *Repentance* for Sin; and whilst this is so good an Action, and so acceptable to Heaven, that it makes the Angels rejoyce, why should he be asham'd,

Of Confession.

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sham'd, and not rather go with Joy and Comfort.

And though he may be under some apprehension ; because of his Ghostly Father, to whom he owns his past Guilt and present Repentance, yet no Thoughts of shame ought to discourage him from going to him, because his Confessor is oblig'd to Secrecy by all Laws, both Divine and Humane ; and cannot violate this Secret, but he makes himself worthy of Death before God and Man. And there's no danger of his being scandaliz'd, tho' the Crimes acknowledg'd be never so foul, because, though he must necessarily be concern'd, when he knows any one to continue under the Guilt of Sin, yet he cannot but rejoyce when he finds the same forsaking his Sins, and by Repentance, returning to a new Life : Then it is, that like the Father of the Prodigal Son, he expresses more Joy in the return of such a Sinner, than in the good Life of others, who stand not in need of Repentance ; for there's more Satisfaction in the lost Sheep that is found, than in the Ninety nine that never went astray. It being then in the power of a repenting Sinner thus to make Heaven and Earth, GOD, Angels, and man, to rejoyce, I

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think he has but little reason to be ashamed of doing it.

And if he be ashamed, yet still ought he to do it, in punishment of his Sins, which, it may be, justly deserve an eternal Confusion and Disgrace; for 'tis a much better Choice to blush and be ashamed for one moment before a Ghostly Father, than to be expos'd one day to publick Confusion, in the presence of Angels and Men, and so to begin eternity. GOD knows his Crimes already, and if he requires him to lay them open before his Minister, 'tis for their Cure; and he ought to look on this as a great Mercy, that for the pardon of such Sins, for which he deserves Hell, God should require no more of him than this. If a Criminal guilty of Death were to have his Pardon for owning his Crime in private to his Judge, would not he be discharged upon very easy terms? What reason then has a Sinner to think much of the like easie conditions, which God here offers him for the release of his Sins?

Q. 'Tis very reasonable what you propose, and he must be very weak and inconsiderate who keeps off from his Duty on this score, and ventures a publick Condemnation to avoid a private Accusation: But is there any thing else you have to

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Of Confession.

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put the Penitent in mind of, before he goes to Confession ?

A. Nothing but again to recommend to him, that he be careful in having a true detestation of all the Sins he shall confess, be they never so little, with a firm Resolution to amend them : For 'tis an Abuse, says St. *Francis Sales*, to confess any kind of Sin, be it Mortal or Venial, without a Will to amend, since Confession was instituted for no other end. I have no more Particulars to burthen him with at present, and therefore being thus prepar'd, I would have him, in the Spirit of Humility, go to his Confessor, and consequently not in any vain and light Ornaments, but as one who is presenting himself before the Judgment-Seat of GOD ; and as a Sinner, who comes humbly to implore Mercy, and Pardon, Thus St. *Charles Borromeus* strictly commands.

At Confession.

BEing come to his Spiritual Director, he is to kneel on his right side, if it may be, with his Face towards the side or back of his Seat ; and having made
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the sign of the Cross, ask his Blessing, saying, *Benedicite*, or *Pray give me your Blessing*; then begin the *Confiteor* in English or Latin, till he comes to those words; *Mea maxima culpa*, Through my most grievous Fault; and so, without any other preamble, make his Confession thus:

Since my last Confession, which was a week or a Fortnight, or a Month ago, I accuse my self, that ——— And having sincerely and briefly declared all he can remember, he may conclude thus: For these, and all my other Sins and Imperfections, which I cannot call to mind, I am heartily sorry, purpose Amendment, and humbly beg Pardon of God, Penance and Absolution of you my Ghostly Father. Then humbly bowing down, go on with the rest of the *Confiteor*; *Ideo precor B. Mariam semper Virginem*: Therefore I beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary &c.

Having thus finish'd what belongs to his part, let him attentively give ear to the Advice of his Director; and when he gives Absolution, endeavour to humble his Heart with all possible Sorrow and Contrition.

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After Confession.

Q. **W**Hat is to be done by the Penitent, when he comes from Confession.

A. He ought to retire a while, and
 1. In hearty Prayer give God Thanks for the Benefit receiv'd in this Sacrament. 2. Renew his good Purposes and Resolutions, and reflect on the great Obligation he is under, of avoiding all the Sins he has confess'd, and in particular, consider again what it is he is to do for the amendment of all his failings, but especially those he apprehends most dangerous, and *finds* himself most subject to; For if a Person as soon as he has done his Confession, thinks no more of his Sins, of the Danger he is in of Relapsing, and of the *Means* he is to use for the avoiding them, I think such an one does his Work by halves, and will very likely soon find it undone again. And therefore, 3dly, He ought to humble himself in the Presence of GOD, beg Grace and Strength from above, whereby he may be enabled to do his Duty, flee all Occasions, and resist all Temptations to Evil, and own
 his

his own weakness, that he has nothing in himself to trust to ; then offer himself to the Divine Protection, and not depart, till he has beg'd Pardon for all the Defects in his present or past Confessions, to be supplied through the infinite Merits of Christ,

Q. Then you don't approve of those who, as soon as they come from Confession, run immediately to their other Affairs, or engage in unnecessary Talking, &c ?

A. There may be extraordinary Accidents or Circumstances, which may excuse some in doing thus ; but if there be any that do it willingly and by choice, besides the great indecency, I look on them as failing in all those Points of their Duty, now mention'd, and as they expect God's Grace for the Amendment of their Sins, are bound to begin a better method.

Q. What Prayers are proper after Confession ?

A. Such as you find in your ordinary Prayer-Books, for that time. I'll set down some of them.

PRAYERS after Confession.

I Return thee, O loving Father, all the Thanks I am able, for that thou hast admitted

Prayers after Confession. 49

admitted me to this Sacrament, and letting thy Mercy take place of thy Justice, hast cast all my Sins out of thy Sight: Give me now thy Grace, O Lord, that by a sincere and perfect Contrition, my Repentance may be like that of *David*, and *Peter*, that, my offences being now remitted, I may hereafter continue faithful in thy Service: But this must be the Work of thy Divine Assistance; for without Thee, my Soul will remain barren, hard and dry, like Earth without Water. I am truly sensible of my own weakness, and being destitute of all that is good, or can any ways be acceptable to Thee, the only Comfort and Confidence I have, is to lift up my Eyes to my Redeemer, and offer to Thee, my GOD, his Tears and Sufferings, that thy Justice being satisfied with this Oblation, thou mayst open to me the Gates of Mercy, and receive me into thy Grace. Look on me with thy Eyes of Pity, and have Compassion on my Miseries, O meek and merciful Lord; strike this my hard and stony Heart, that it may break forth into a Fountain of healing Waters; the Waters of true Contrition, with which my Soul may be cleansed and purified. Perfect the Work thou hast begun in me, for I am thy Creature; and grant
the

50 Prayers after Confession.

the Confession I have made, may find acceptance in thy sight; and that whatever is wanting in it, through my weakness, may be supplied by thy Goodness and Mercy: Thy Mercy I implore and by it beg Pardon of all my Sins, here firmly purposing in thy Presence to avoid all that may be displeasing to Thee, and with all diligence to apply my self to the practice of Virtue; and I hope Thou wilt not deny me thy Assistance, O Lord, since thou hast promis'd never to forsake those that trust in Thee: Permit my heart to be no more seiz'd, and blindly carried away with the Follies of this Life; Permit me no more to experience my own weakness, in my wonted Relapses; 'tis high time I should be now converted from my evil ways, forsake my Errors, amend my Failings, since hitherto so many days and years have gone away in good Purposes, but with very little improvement of my Soul. Command therefore, O Sovereign Lord, this my rebellious Heart, and force it to a compliance with thy Law; break all my Passions, rule my affections, direct my Desires, strengthen all my good endeavours, and give ear now to this thy unworthy Servant; let not my Wickedness make thee forget thy Goodness; for though my Sins call for Justice, yet thou hast still
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Prayers after Confession. 51

Mercy, whereby thou canst save, and once more receive me into thy grace, my God, my Lord, and all my Hope, who livest and reignest for ever and ever.

O God of Mercy and Pity, having now through thy gracious Goodness, disburthen'd my conscience of the guilt wherewith it was oppress'd, and in the humblest manner I was able, discover'd all the sins I could think of, to thy Minister, my Ghostly Father, I most humbly beseech thee to accept this Confession, and forgive me all my Trespases, as well those I have forgot, as those I remembered.

Grant me Grace, O Lord, to live more carefully and diligently hereafter, and to abstain from my former follies, which I utterly detest, firmly purposing, through thy grace, never any more to offend in them; especially, O my most merciful and bountiful Saviour, give me Grace to withstand those Temptations, with which I am most infested, and to avoid all the Occasions of offending thee for the future.

The Just man falls seven times a day; how much reason then have I to be jealous of my self, O Lord, and fear that I shall not be true to my Resolutions, having through my own Frailty and vicious Customs encreased the Weakness and Blindness in which I was born? yet Lord,
I hope.

52 Prayers after Confession.

I hope through thy Grace, and firmly purpose by thy merciful Favour, never to consent to any Mortal sin, from which I humbly beg thee to preserve me whilst I live. And as for my Venial Sins and Imperfections, I resolve to strive against them, and trust in thy Goodness, I shall at length amend them. For this end grant me thy Grace, Sweet Jesus, to be exact in examining my Conscience every Night, as I am directed, and every morning happily to begin the Day, by offering thee the first Fruits of all my Actions, that the rest of it may ever be employ'd to thy Glory.

As for the Penance enjoyn'd me, I humbly beg thy Assistance for the remembring and performing it, as I ought; and that I never forget my Resolutions, or lay aside my endeavours of changing my Life, till I become a true Penitent, and put on the New Man; that so, thro' the Merits of thy blessed Passion, I may here obtain full forgiveness of my Sins, and hereafter, Life everlasting: Grant this, O my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, World without end.
Amen.

Q. Is there any thing more belongs to this part of the Sacrament?

A. Nothing:

Prayers after Confession. 53

A. Nothing: And yet since Confession is in order to amendment of Life, I cannot but again advise the Penitent, before he concludes, to make a short Reflection on the Sins he has confess'd, and of the Means by which he is to endeavour an effectual Amendment. And therefore, if he has accus'd himself of Neglect in saying his Prayers, will this be to any Purpose, if when he goes next to Prayers, he takes no more care than formerly? If he has accus'd himself of offending in Words, by Lying, Swearing, Detracting or other indecent Discourse, must not he, when he comes next into Company, think something of his Failing, to which he has been subject, and strive to forbear, by having a stricter watch on himself? and if he does not this, what are become of all his purposes of Amendment? And if Company, ill Books, Play, or Games have been the Occasion of his offending, what will his Confession and Resolutions avail; if afterwards he takes no care to forsake these, and cast them off? Is it not evident his Repentance was not sincere, and that however he has confess'd, yet his Sin still lies at his Door? This Review and Consideration of the Care to be taken to amend the Sins he has confess'd, is necessary for the Penitent to make every Day, and
ought

ought to be a part of the Examination of Conscience every Night : And I think there can be no better way of knowing the Sincerity and Validity of his Confessions, than by thus enquiring, *What care he takes for not falling into the like Evils again?* For if he discovers in himself but very little or none of this diligence, he may with reason fear his Confessions have not been so well made as they should be. It may not indeed, be always in his power to *Amend*, but there can be no Excuse for him, if he does not at least *desire, endeavour, and use means* in order to it.

Q. What is your Opinion then of such as have any *Habitual Vice, or Sin of Custom*, of which they accuse themselves as often as they go to Confession? Are their former Confessions invalid, because they often fall into the same Sin again?

A. If such Persons, after Confession, use proper Means, and sincerely endeavour, according to the direction of a prudent Confessor, to master such vicious Customs, and avoid the Sins to which they are subject, and are truly concern'd and afflicted to see themselves so frail; it is to be hop'd, their Confessions may be good and valid. But if those who are subject to any vicious Custom (as of *Swearing, Cursing, Drinking, or whatever else is* thus

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thus abominable) go to Confession and there acknowledging their Crimes, pretend to be sorry, and to resolve upon Amendment, and after their going from Confession, take no care to amend, nor use any means proper for the overcoming their vicious Habits, such as these, I think, have reason to judge their Confessions to be invalid, their Repentance to be false, and had much better not go to Confession, than go thus ill prepar'd, and abuse this Sacrament and the Goodness of GOD. And if they blindly deceive themselves, and go often to Confession thus indispos'd, still repeating the same Mortal Sins over again, without taking due care and pains for their Amendment, they ought to be sent away without Absolution, never to be admitted to it, till upon sufficient Tryal they give evident Proof of *Sincere Desire* and *Endeavours* of changing their Lives; and till this has been manifested in two or three Confessions, it may be very proper not to allow them to go to the Holy Communion. All this is to be understood of the Habit of *Mortal Sin*.

Q. Now you are on this Subject, what say you of that other, more tender sort of Christians, who desirous to do their Duty, upon any oversight, Failing or Imperfection,

Imperfection, presently fall into a displeasure, are disquieted, vexed, and peevishly angry with themselves, even to a sort of Dejection, so that they seem ready to conclude all their Endeavours to be to no purpose.

A. 'Tis most certain, they want Patience and Meekness towards themselves, and the Root of this Disquiet has generally something of Pride and Self-love in it, which makes them troubled to see themselves imperfect. Let these therefore be heartily sorry for all the Faults they commit; let them take Pains to amend them; but this is to be done, not in the Spirit of Choler, but of meekness; for such a Repentance is the most acceptable and efficacious: And if they see they amend not so fast as they desire, let them hence take occasion to humble themselves the more, and resolve to wait and go on with their good Endeavours, till GOD shall give a Blessing. Read *St. Francis Sales*, on this Subject, *Introd. Part III. c. 9. Of Meekness towards our selves.*

Q. One thing more I have to ask about this Part of the Sacrament: What if a Person, after a due Examination, cannot call to mind some of his Sins, or should forget them, while he is at Confession, are these

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these likewise forgiven by the Sacrament of Penance?

A. It is not at all to be doubted; for since he would willingly have confessed them, if he had remembred them; and went to Confession with a hearty Sorrow for all his Offences, 'tis not to be question'd, but GOD, who knows the Sincerity of his heart, will accept of his good Desires, and give him a full Discharge. And now for the Third Part of this Sacrament.

Of the Third Part of the Sacrament of Penance, viz. Satisfaction.

Q. **W**Hat mean you by *Satisfaction*?

A. Nothing but the performing the Penance enjoyn'd the Penitent by the Confessor, which, through the Merits and Passion of Christ, may be accepted by GOD, in order to satisfy for the Injury offer'd to him in every Sin he has committed.

Q. How is this Penance to be performed?

A. In

A. In the Spirit of true Humility and Repentance, and with the best Devotion he is able : And therefore, if there be any that carelessly huddle over their Penance, or perform it coldly, or any ways neglect or make light of it, I think they are much to blame, understand but little of the true state of a Penitent, and the Mercy receiv'd from God in the forgiveness of their Sins; and can in reason expect but very little Assistance from Heaven, for the prevention of future Relapses. And what a Judgment ought they to make of themselves and their *Confession*, who, before they have finish'd this last part of it, fall into their wonted Coldness and wilful Neglects, and are no sooner come away from owning their past Faults, but they make matter for a new Confession ?

Q. Ought a Penitent to perform any other Penance besides that which is enjoin'd him at Confession ?

A. The Penalties enjoin'd in Confession are generally much inferiour to the Sins; and therefore when a Man has duly finish'd that, he has still reason to fear there is more Punishment due from the Divine Justice to the Offences he has committed : For this reason, the *life of a good Christian*, according to the Council of

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Trent, ought to be a perpetual Penance. And as he daily preserves and renews the detestation of all Sin in his Heart, so he often imposes on himself some Penance, either in the recital of some Prayers, giving Alms, Abstinence, as to *Eating, Talking, Seeing, Diversion, &c.* for the making Satisfaction for the Injuries done to GOD, which is the Spirit of Penance. And he is careful to make use of all the evils that befall him for the same end, accepting willingly, and offering up, with the same spirit of Penance, all the inconveniences of Life, the distempers of Body, Troubles of Mind, Disgusts, Losses, Necessities, Afflictions either publick or private, and especially all the pains and Hardships he is forced to suffer, in the state wherein God has placed him. For these being as so many Penances, which God sends and appoints for his Punishment, there can be no doubt, but the bearing them with Patience, is the most acceptable satisfaction, that can be made to the Divine Justice.

Now this method, as it is proper for all Christians, so it seems most necessary for all such as have an ill Habit, or Custom, of falling into any sort of Sin; for if they in earnest desire to master this ill Custom, they can have no more effectual means, than to add to their good Purposes and Endeavours

Endeavours certain Penalties to be undergone, for every time they fall into the Crime they design to amend: And therefore, if for every Offence were appointed a quarter of an hours reading a good Book, or Praying, or giving some Alms, or some Self Denial, which every one may find proper in their own Circumstances, it might be hoped, this might by degrees awaken their Care, make them more watchful over their Words and Actions, and restrain them at length from offending. For, since Almighty God often makes use of this way, and by his Scourges awakens Sinners, and frights them from their evil, it cannot be amiss for Penitents to follow the same method, and hope for some good effect of these their Endeavours. At least, this their Diligence will give assurance to their Ghostly Father, that however they may not be yet thoroughly reclaimed, yet, that they truly desire it, whilst thus punishing Sin in themselves, they professedly declare War against it, and cannot seem unworthy of Absolution. And who can doubt but they, who strive thus to be good, though they may for a time find it difficult to master their perverse Inclinations, will at length be favour'd with Succours from above, and by the help of Divine Grace, be proof against

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gainst all the assaults of the Enemy, and be much securer for the Pains it has cost them to come to that state.

Thus have I in short laid down the principal Duties of those who desire to come truly prepar'd to the Sacrament of Penance; and I hope, as many as make use of these Directions, will find the Benefit of it in the full remission of all their Sins.

A Method of Examination of Conscience, for such as Confess often, according to the threefold Duty we owe, 1. To God, 2. To our Neighbour. 3. To our selves.

I. In relation to God.

1. **H**Ave you, through your own fault, omitted your Morning or Evening Prayers, or neglected to make your daily Examination of Conscience?

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Have you pray'd negligently, and with wilful Distractions?

2. Have you well spent your Time, especially on Sundays and Holidays, not in lazy lying a Bed, or any sort of idle Entertainments, but in Reading, Praying, or other pious Exercises; and taken care, that those under your charge have done the like, and not wanted any Instructions necessary for their Condition, nor Time for Prayer, or to prepare for the Sacraments?

3. Have you spoke reverently of God, and all holy things? Have you not taken his Name in vain, nor told Untruths?

4. Have you omitted your Duty for Humane Respects, Interest, Compliance, &c.

5. Have you been zealous for God's Honour, for Justice, Virtue, and Truth, and reprov'd such as do otherwise?

6. Have you resign'd your Will to God in Troubles, Necessities, Sicknes, &c.

7. Have you faithfully resisted all thoughts of Infidelity, Distrust, &c.

II. In relation to your Neighbour.

1. Have you disobey'd your Superiors, murmur'd against their Commands, or spoke contemptibly of them?

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Examination of Conscience. 63

2. Have you been troubled, peevish, and impatient when told of your faults, and corrected by them? Or have you scorn'd their good Advice, and censur'd their Proceedings?

3. Have you offended any by injurious or threatning Words?

4. Or lessen'd their Reputation by any sort of Detraction; and whether in any matter of concern?

5. Or spread any Reports, whether true or false, that expose your Neighbour to contempt, or make him undervalued?

6. Have you, by carrying Stories backward and forward, caus'd Discord and Misunderstanding betwixt Neighbours?

7. Have you been froward or peevish towards any, in Carriage, Speech, or Conversation?

8. Or taken pleasure to anger and mortifie them, and provoke them to Swear, Curse, or any ways offend God?

9. Have you scorn'd or reproach'd them for their corporal or spiritual Imperfections?

10. Have you been excessive in reprehending others under your Care; or have you been wanting in giving just Reproof?

11. Have you had Charity to bear with their Oversight and Imperfections, and given them good Counsel.

12. Have you been solicitous for all under your Charge, and duly provided both for Soul and Body ?

III. *In relation to your Self.*

1. Have you been over-eager in following your own Will; in defending your own Opinion in things indifferent, dangerous, or Scandalous ?

2. Have you taken pleasure in hearing your self prais'd, or given way to thoughts of Vanity ?

3. Have you Indulg'd your self in over-much Ease, or any ways yielded to Sensuality ?

4. Has your Conversation been edifying and moderate ; or have you been froward, proud, or troublesome to others.

5. Have you spent over-much time in Play, uselefs Employments, and thereby omitted, or put off your Devotions to unreasonable times ?

If such as Confess often, fall into any of the more grievous Sins, not here mention'd, their own Memory will easily suggest them, since 'tis impossible for a Soul that is tender, to forget any such Mortal Offence, which must of necessity Afflict her, and be as a weight upon her. And therefore

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Examination of Conscience. 65

therefore it may not be necessary for them to turn over longer Tables of Sins, which are chiefly intended for general Confessions.

An Examination upon the Ten Commandments, proper for a General Confession.

COMMANDMENT. I.

The First Commandment is broken, First, by Sins against Faith; As,

1. **T**O be ignorant of the principal Mysteries of Christianity; of the Creed, Commandments of God, and the Church, or Sacraments.

2. Wilfully to doubt, or obstinately to Err in any Point of Faith.

3. To have delay'd in embracing the true Faith, for humane Respects, Interest, Fear, &c.

4. To favour Hereticks, or wicked Men, in supporting and approving what they do.

5. To read their Books either with Pleasure or Danger.

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6. With Curiosity to examine Divine Myſteries and Secrets of Providence, by pure humane Reason.

7. To contemn or deride Holy things.

8. To abuſe the Words of holy Scripture, by applying them to wicked or prophane Senſes, making them ſerve for Jeſts, or other ill uſes.

9. To deſire to know things to come, which belongs to God only, or things paſt or preſent, which are hid from us; and for this end, to employ unlawful Means, as *Magicians*, *Fortune-tellers*, or other ſuperſtitious Inventions.

10. To give credit to Dreams, make ſuperſtitious obſervations; to employ Prayers or ſacred Names to ill uſes; to uſe Charms, &c.

Secondly, By Sins againſt Hope.

1. By diſtruſting in the Mercies of God, and diſpairing of Pardon.

2. By preſuming on God's Goodneſs without any concern of Amendment.

3. By deferring one's Conversion or Repentance, till the end of Life.

4. By expoſing ones ſelf to any danger of offending God, either by Company, Reading, or otherways, which is called tempting God.

5. By

the Ten Commandments. 67

5. By exposing ones self without necessity to some corporal Danger, as of Sickness, Wounds, or Death.

6. By neglecting the Remedies God has appointed in these Dangers, as of Physick for the Body, Prayer and Sacraments for the Soul.

Thirdly, By Sins against Charity ; As,

1. By not loving God above all things, but rather chusing wilfully to offend him, than suffer some loss as to Honour, Riches, &c.

2. By preferring the Love of Men before the love of GOD ; as to Offend GOD for fear of displeasing Men, or of being jeer'd or slighted.

3. By omitting a Duty for shame, or other Temporal Respect.

4. By thinking seldom of God ; by being asham'd to speak of him ; by not hearkning to his Inspirations ; forgetting his Benefits ; neglecting to give him Thanks.

Fourthly, By Sins against the Vertue of Religion ; As,

1. By not adoring or praying to him, or doing it very seldom.

2. By

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2. By praying without attention, and by wilful Distractions.

3. By being wanting in our respect to God in time of Prayer; By talking in holy Places, and being there without due Modesty and Gravity, either in Looks, Words, or Actions.

Fifthly, By Sins against the Care we are bound to have of our own Salvation; As,

1. By the love of Idleness, in chusing rather to do nothing than be employ'd in any commendable Exercise; which is a Sin carries a Train of many others after it.

2. By being solicitous in temporal Concerns, and neglecting the means of Salvation.

3. By deferring Amendment of Life, or immediately desisting after having begun it.

4. By neglecting the means of Salvation; as the Sacraments, Prayer, good Works, or performing them without Devotion.

The Second Commandment is broken,

1. By the ill Custom of taking God's Name in vain.

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2. By Swearing what one knows or doubts to be false.

3. By Swearing what is unjust, or prejudicial to others,

4. By Swearing without necessity, tho' the thing be true and just.

5. By Blaspheming.

6. By cursing ones self, or others, or taking pleasure in hearing others Swear or Curse, or provoking them to't.

7 By not reprehending them when we may and ought.

8. By making a vow to do what is impossible to fulfil, or to do what is evil and displeasing to God, or of doing what one never intends to do.

9. By breaking lawful Vows, or deferring to fulfil them without just cause.

The Third Commandment is broken.

1. By doing servile Works on the Sunday, or causing others to do the like without a considerable necessity.

2. By employing considerable part of Holy-days in temporal Affairs, as Merchants, Advocates, Solicitors.

3. By omitting to hear Mass, or not hearing it with attention and reverence.

4. By prophaning Sundays and Holidays, spending them in Idleness, Gaming,

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ing, Dances, Feasting, and other Recreations.

5. By not sanctifying a considerable part of these Days in Reading, Praying, and not taking care that those under your charge do the like.

The Fourth Commandment is broken.

1. By Children not giving due respect to their Parents ; or by despising them, either in their Heart or Actions.

2. By not loving them, but wishing their Death, or other Misfortunes ; and forsaking them in their Necessities.

3. By not obeying them, or not doing it readily ; or by obeying them in things unlawful.

4. By slighting their Reprehensions, and resisting their Corrections.

5. By putting them into Passion, and not taking care to pacifie them.

6. By not executing their last Will and Testament, or delaying to do it.

II. By Servants : 1. In disobeying their Masters.

2. By failing in their Trust or Diligence that is required at their hands.

3. By neglecting the reasonable and just interest of their Master.

4. By

the Ten Commandments, 71

4. By letting their Master suffer in any kind, through their Sloth, Neglect, &c.

5. By obeying them in things unlawful, as Lying, Swearing, Stealing, &c.

III. By Parents not performing their Duty to their Children: 1. In not loving them, and supplying them in their corporal Necessities.

2. In not being careful of their Salvation.

3. In not correcting them when they stand in need; in flattering them in their Passions, or indulging them in their evil Inclinations.

4. In being too severe to them.

5. In not giving them good Example.

6. In forcing them to the choice of their state of Life.

IV. By Masters: 1. In not having due care of their Servants, as to their Life and Conversation.

2. In not being watchful over them, to reprehend their Faults, make them say their Prayers, go to Mass on Sundays and Holydays, frequent the Sacraments.

3. In commanding them to do some Evil.

In treating them too rudely and injuriously.

5. In

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5. In not duly paying their Wages.

The Fifth Commandment is broken.

1. By Anger, Quarrelling, Threatning, by injurious or reproachful Words or Actions against any Neighbour.

2. By Revenge, or deliberate Thoughts or desires of Revenge.

3. By Provoking, Striking, Challenging, Wounding, or being the cause of another's Death.

4. By keeping Ill-will, bearing Malice, refusing to salute, or speak to any Neighbour out of Hatred or Aversion, or refusing to be reconcil'd.

The Sixth Commandment is broken.

I. By the *Hearing*. 1. In willingly giving ear to immodest Words, Discourses, Songs. 2. By taking pleasure therein. 3. By not hindring or discouraging them, when he may. 4. By not avoiding the Company of those that speak them.

II. By the *Sight*. 1. In looking on immodest Objects, as on Nakedness and dishonest Pictures, Figures, &c. 2. In Reading dishonest Books, in keeping them, lending them to others, or neglecting to suppress them when he may.

III. By

the Ten Commandments. 73

III. By the *Tongue*. 1. In speaking immodest Words, or such as bearing a double sense, are apt to create impure Thoughts in others. 2. By relating wanton Stories, or wicked Actions of himself or others. 3. By singing unchast Songs, or reciting immodest Verses. 4. By soliciting others to any sort of Impurity.

IV. By the *Touch*, in using indecent Actions, or touching himself or others immodestly.

V. By *Thoughts*. 1. By willingly, and with delight, entertaining impure Thoughts. 2. Desiring to commit the sins thought on. 3. In resolving to commit them.

VI. By *Immodest Actions*. 1. In occasioning Pollution in himself or others. 2. In committing the Sin of Dishonesty, and whether effected by soliciting, seducing with Promises or Forcing: And whether it be Fornication, Adultery, or Incest. 3. In Sins against Nature.

The Seven Commandment is broken,

1. By taking anothers Goods, and in what value. 2. By retaining what he knows belongs to another. 3. By denying his Debts, or wilfully delaying the Payment, to the prejudice of his Neighbour. 4. By making unjust Bargains or Contracts; and

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in this every Trade and Profession ought to make a strict Enquiry. 5. By causing any Damage to his Neighbour. 6. By putting off false and not current Money. 7. By desiring anothers Goods. 8. Not giving Alms when Necessity requires. 9. Not paying Tythes. 10. By Simony.

The Eighth Commandment is broken,

1. By witnessing what is false, or defending a false Accusation, as in Lawyers and Solicitors; or condemning the Innocent; or discharging the Guilty, as Judges, Arbitrators. 2. By Detraction, either in laying something false to anothers charge, or reporting for truth what is only doubtful; or revealing something yet secret and unknown, tho' true, in prejudice of some third Person, with a Declaration, whether it was done out of Lightness and Indiscretion, or out of Ill-will; and whether in presence of many persons, and whether in a matter of great Concern. 3. By lying, which is speaking a thing which we judge to be otherwise than we say: Whether one has a Custom of it, or does it to the considerable Prejudice of others. 4. By Hypocrisy, which is a Lye in Action;

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*The Ninth and Tenth Commandments
are broken,*

By all unlawful and wilful Desires, in regard of Impurity and Theft, which are already set down in the Sixth and Seventh Commandments.

The Precepts of the Church.

I. **T**O keep certain appointed Days holy, with the Obligation of hearing Mass, and resting from servile Works.

II. To observe the commanded Days of Fast and Abstinence.

III. To confess to your Pastor, at least once a year.

IV. To receive the B. Sacrament at Easter or there-about.

V. To pay Tithes to your Pastor.

The Examination, in regard of these Precepts, is very easie, and therefore we proceed,

Of the Seven deadly Sins.

The Sins of Pride are,

1. **I**N taking pleasure in thinking too well of ones self, and valuing himself above Desert.

2. In publishing what he esteems good in himself, that he may be esteem'd.

3. In Arrogance, by attributing to himself the Goods he has not.

4. In Presumption and Ambition, by confiding too much in his own strength, conceiting himself capable of things above him, and rashly seeking them.

5. In Contempt of others, by reason of the good Opinion one has of himself; and when one shews this Contempt by Words or Actions, and by being severe, and exacting on Inferiours.

6. In want of submission to Superiours by disobeying them, blaming their Conduct, or murmuring against them.

7. In not acknowledging his Faults; or when confessing the Fact, one maintains he has done well, or at least alledges false Excuses, and unjust Reasons.

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8. In contempt of Admonitions and Corrections.

9. In obstinacy in ones own Opinion.

10. In Discord

11. In Hypocrisie.

12. In Curiosity, which enclines us to know things prejudicial to our Salvation.

13. In Ingratitude.

The Sins of *Covetousness, Luxury, and Sloth*, have been examined above in the First, Sixth, and Seventh Commandments.

The Sins of Gluttony, are,

In Eating or Drinking to Excess, as far as they are prejudicial, either to our Health or our Reason, or any way scandalous, or of ill Example.

The Sins of Envy, are,

1. Trouble at the good success of ones Neighbour; or when one endeavours to do him a diskindness, or speaks often against him, to diminish the Esteem others have of him; or creating in them an ill Opinion of him.

2. When one rejoyces at his Neighbours harm.

The Sins of Anger, are,

1. Not to endure any thing contrary to our inclinations.
2. To suffer ones self to be carried away by the motions of Wrath, against those that give us any Trouble.
3. To proceed to Quarrels, injurious Language, Oaths, Curses, Threats ; to Revenge, or the desire and wishing for it.
4. Not to pardon Injuries, or be reconcil'd to Enemies, or with such of our Neighbours, with whom one has had some Misunderstanding or Falling out,

*The Examination of Sins,
which One commits in the
Person of Another.*

1. **I**N doing an Evil Action, or what is esteemed to be so, in the presence of others ; and more especially, if it be done with a design to stir up others to Sin.

8. By compelling them to Evil, by some Force.

3. In

Examination of Sins. 79

3. In giving Aid or Assistance towards a wicked Action, by Money or otherwise.

4. In harbouring or concealing bad people, that they be not discover'd or punish'd.

5. In sharing in any Evil, whether in the Action or Profit arising.

6. In not hindering Evil, when one may.

7. By teaching one Evil, which he knew not before.

8. By commanding, counselling, soliciting, threatening, or otherways provoking another to ill.

9 By approving evil Actions, and praising them who do them.

10. By bragging of Sins he has committed, or of such as he never did.

11. By slighting the good Deeds of others, or any ways exposing them to Scoffing or Scorn,

12. By sowing discord amongst others, either by false or true Reports, and by endeavouring to keep up a Misunderstanding amongst them.

13. By not instructing those under ones Care; not reprehending or chastizing them when necessity requires, but permitting them to live as they please.

14. By not giving fraternal Correction, and charitable Admonitions for the preventing of Evil.

80 Examination of Sins.

There are besides these, particular Sins belonging to every State, Trade, Profession, Calling, upon which every one ought to call himself to an account, and see how far he has been wanting in any part of his Duty.

This Examination of Conscience may be very proper for those pious Christians, who, following the Advice of St. Francis Sales, once every Year take a general Review of the Estate of their Souls, of their Passions, Affections, Inclinations, Habits, so to see, whether they advance or go back in the Way of Virtue; and after having repair'd all the defects of the Year past, by a general Repentance and Confession, enter upon their Duty again with new Vigor and Spirit, which is a very commendable Practice.

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INSTRUCTIONS

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Communion.

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Of some General Preparations before Receiving.

2^d WHEN a Person has by a good Confession obtained Pardon of his Sins, is he upon this, duly prepar'd to go forthwith to the Holy Communion?

A. There may be Circumstances, in which this may be allowed ; but it ought not to be done by those who have opportunity and liberty of doing otherwise. And therefore I must needs say, I cannot

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but

but greatly disapprove of those who make it their general Practice of running from the Confession-Seat to the Communion-Table, without taking time to make any particular preparation for this latter and greater Duty.

Q. What may be your reason for disallowing this Practice ;

A. I have hinted it to you already ; and 'tis, because though Confession be a Preparation for receiving the Sacrament, yet there is still another Preparation necessary for those who desire to partake of all the Fruits that may be gathered from this Tree of Life ; and such as neglect to add this Preparation to the former, I cannot but fear, are deprived of the better part of this fruit. What this Preparation is, I'll set down in the next Chapter.

Q. How long time then do you require betwixt Confession and Communion ?

A. There are some, as *Granada*, &c. who think it proper for a Penitent to go to Confession three Days before he intends to receive. And this may be very convenient for such as are subject to any *Habitual Sin*, that so, in that time, they may make some tryal of themselves, and of their good purposes, which they make of amendment : And, believe me, those who dare not trust themselves and their good Endeavours,

The H. Communion. 83

Endeavours, under the Assistance of the Divine Grace, so long, I fear will prove no extraordinary Communicants, by going sooner, and seem to think not of taking much pains in order to amend,

Q. But for others who are subject only to ordinary failings, what do you advise?

A. 'Tis a very good practice, to go to Confession the Evening before and Receive next Day. The *Vigils* and *Eves* of Festivals are Penitential days, and seem intended by the Church, as for Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, so likewise for Repentance and Confession too; and I could wish all those, who have convenience of doing it, would not fail of complying with this Intention of the Church, instead of putting off their Confession till the next day of the Festival, by which they shorten their time of preparing for Communion, and are on Great Solemnities doing Works of Penance, which are design'd for Joy, Praise, and Thanksgiving; and this is most certainly a perverting the Order of things, and nothing less than a Solecism in Devotion.

Q. But what must they do, who have not this opportunity?

A. I could be well satisfied if all would do it, who have the opportunity: But the Misery is, these Days of Preparation

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as *Vigils* and *Eves*, are too generally abus'd, and the Spirit of the Church, is in this point almost forgot: For, tho' they are observ'd with *Fasting*, yet this is done with so much Liberty, Variety and Ease, that it has now more of a Formality in it than of a Penitential Work. But, as for any thing else, who can see any Distinction betwixt these and any other days of the Week; Those who have *Leisure* are seen at *Plays*, at the *Park*, and their *Games*; and 'tis well, if some times they carry not on their Diversions so long, till the Holiday breaks in upon them. And for such, whose business it is to *Work, Labour, Serve, or Wait* on others, they are so much taken up on these Days, above any others, that they are generally then in a hurry, preparing indeed; but 'tis, that either the House, or those that command it, may appear in their *Holiday Vanity*. So that whilst the Church piously designs these Days for Christians to prepare their Souls for the worthy Celebrating the ensuing Solemnities, her Intentions are wholly perverted. There's a *clean House*, forsooth, *vain Dresses*, and *variety of Dishes* to be had on *Holidays*, and 'tis in preparing, for these the *Eves* are taken up: Nay, toying till midnight often will not do, but they must borrow a piece of the Holiday too.

Q. And

Q. And is not this the reason why so many Servants are so ignorant, and defective in their Christian Duties, in going to the Sacraments in due time and manner as they ought.

A. This is something from our purpose at present ; but however, in a word, I think it is : And it were to be wish'd, that Masters and Mistresses of all Families would duly consider it, and not let their *unnecessary Affairs*, however colour'd with the fair Pretexts of *Decency* and *Order*, take place of *greater Duties*, and on Days appointed for this end, rather see, that their Servants take some care for their Souls, than be wholly employ'd in preparing Houses, Dishes, and Dresses. But let them look to this, as they are to answer it at the last Day ; for, I cannot but think it will be severely charg'd upon them, if they don't allow their Servants convenient time for well-preparing for the Sacraments, and likewise see them do it. But I return to your former Question ; and my Advice is ;

That such as cannot possibly go overnight to Confession, should go as early as they can next morning, that so they may have some considerable time wherein they may wholly employ their Thoughts
in

in preparing for Communion, and not make one work of both.

Q. What think you of those, who having but little leisure, are altogether taken up in the time betwixt Confession and Communion, in saying their *Penance*?

A. For such as go over-night to Confession, they do well to perform their Penance that Evening. But for those who are straighten'd in time, I think, after Confession, they should wholly turn their Thoughts in disposing their Soul for Receiving, and let their Penance stay till afterward, though not to put it off long, or neglect it: For it seems very improper to go saying the *Penitential Psalms*, &c. to the Communion-Table, which requires a more peculiar sort of Devotion to prepare for that Divine Banquet.

Q. What is your Opinion of those, who for the most part of the time, betwixt Confession and Receiving, are with great Fears and Solitude, considering whether they have not omitted something in Confession, and are disturb'd with Difficulties and Scruples about this point: So that tho' they regularly apply themselves to prepare for Communion, yet this ever runs in their Mind, and in this kind of disquiet go to Receive;

A. They

A. They stand in need of a discreet Director, to deliver them from this mischievous Indiscretion: For though the Care and Concern for making an entire Confession be a great Duty, when one is preparing for the Sacrament of Penance; yet, when he is come from Confession, and is now preparing for the Communion, then that same *Care* and *Concern* is generally nothing better than a *Temptation*; and the voluntary admitting such sollicitous Thoughts, under the colour of *fearing to go Unprepar'd*, is a Deceit of the Enemy, and the most certain way of doing what he pretends to fear; that is, under the notion of Preparing, to go most certainly, in some manner, *Unprepar'd*.

Q. But, if after he has done his Confession there comes into his Mind any Mortal Sin, which till then, he had forgot, ought not he to return to his Director, and confess it before he Receives?

A. In this case indeed, he is bound to do so; but there's a difference between one, to whom this happens by accident, and the other you spoke of before, who is of that anxious Temper, that he has never done Confessing, who is afraid of every Fancy, and is in that disturbance, that he can't tell but every flying Thought is a mortal Sin. Such an one as this ought
to

to be restrained from going again to Confession upon every fright, and is to be encourag'd to rest satisfied in doing according to the direction of his Ghostly Father; for this is certainly the best Rule he can follow; for whilst he sees himself subject to frequent and unreasonable Frights, he has reason to suspect his own Judgment: And in whom ought he then to depend, but on his Ghostly Father, whose Office it is to direct those under his Care? And therefore, if he orders him to have little Regard to all such disquieting Thoughts, and bend all his Endeavours to go on with the Work he is about, rather than be thus ever looking back: He ought to have a Confidence, that his only way of doing right, is to do according to Direction. And if he cannot acquiesce in this, but is still perplex'd with Fears, and ever running to his Confessor, 'tis an evident Sign, that 'tis not scruples he is sick of, but Pride, Self-Love, Obstinacy, and Self-Conceit, who in a case wherein he evidently stands in need of Direction, cannot yet submit to be directed, but is more ready to hearken to his own *Fears*, than the Judgment of his Pastor: And so goes ever to the Sacrament with a certain Disquiet of Mind, which

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which requires the greatest Serenity and Peace.

Q. I understand you very well; and it seems but very reasonable, when one is going about so great a Work, as is the Receiving the Blessed Sacrament, he should not then be saying his Penance, or disturbing himself unreasonably about Confession, but turn all his Thoughts and Endeavours to prepare his Soul, and fit it for the worthy Receiving so Divine a Guest. But now tell me what that Preparation is? and what is the Devotion proper for that time?

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

*Of the Devotion proper before
Receiving the Holy Com-
munion.*

A. WHEN a Person, by a good Con-
fession has cleans'd his Soul
from Sin, and effectually taken
care, that there be now no danger of
bringing the Author of Life into a place
of Darknes ; and having farther endea-
vour'd by Prayer, Meditation, and other
holy Exercises, to free himself from all
affection to Venial Sin ; and that his
heart be not moved with any sort of Pas-
sions or Affections, which may hinder him
in his Application to Jesus Christ ; be-
cause, though these Defects render him
not altogether unworthy, yet they con-
siderably diminish the Fruits of the Holy
Communion, and cause many ill Effects
and Indispositions, very prejudicial to the
Soul ; when a Person, I say, has us'd his
best Endeavours to go thus far, he ought
then to apply himself to such Devotions
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as seem more nearly to dispose the Soul for the Holy Communion.

First, he is to propose to himself the right end, for which he is to Communicate; and this ought to be the same for which Christ Instituted the Communion, viz. *That Christ may abide in us, and we in him*; that so, by receiving the Blessed Sacrament, he may receive the Spirit of Christ, and be transformed into him; that is, live as he lived, with the same Charity, Humility, Patience, Obedience, Poverty of Spirit, &c. that being thus dead to Sin, the Life of Christ may be truly manifest in him.

To this General Intention he may add some particular end, as to obtain Grace for the mastering such a Failing, resisting such Temptations, advancing in such a Vertue, in Thanksgiving for such Blessings, &c. and never omitting, as often as he approaches to this Holy Sacrament, to renew the Memory of Christ's Passion, and give him Thanks for the inestimable Benefit of our Redemption.

Q. When he has thus propos'd to himself the End for which he is to Communicate, what is he to do next?

A. He ought then to think of putting his Soul into such a state as may render it a becoming and most acceptable Habitation

tation to his Redeemer, whom he intends to Receive : For tho' his Soul be so far prepar'd by Confession, as to be purify'd from the filth of Sin, yet it ought still to be *adorn'd* and *set forth*, to make this Preparation compleat : As when a Palace is making ready for a Prince, 'tis not sufficient to cleanse it from all that is foul and unbecoming, but there is still, besides this, a necessity of Royal Furniture, and such Ornaments, as are suitable to the Personage that is to be receiv'd in it. Thus when a Soul is preparing to become a Palace for the King of Heaven, it has all its filth indeed, cast out by Contrition and a good Confession ; but where is still the Royal Furniture, the Ornaments that become this Abode of the Divine Majesty ?

Q. 'Tis true, this is very necessary : But what are these Ornaments ?

A. You may be sure they must be spiritual ones, and such as are most acceptable to God ; and since he has above all things recommended to us, That we *Believe in Him*, that we *put our Trust in Him*, and *Love Him, above all things* ; it seems very necessary, that before a Person goes to the Communion, he should, for some time, exercise himself in these Vertues, that so, when our Lord comes into his Soul, he

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may find it quicken'd by *Faith*, rais'd up by *Hope*, and inflam'd with *Charity*; for these certainly are the Ornaments, this the Furniture most proper for a Soul, that desires for to give a grateful Entertainment to her LORD. To these may be added Acts of other Virtues, as of *Humility*, *Fear*, *Thanksgiving*, &c. which will likewise help to adorn, and be as Incense to perfume the House, wherein this Heavenly Guest is to be lodg'd. I'll here set you down a Form, according to the most Approved Authors, in which these Virtues may be practis'd, to help you in order to prepare your Soul for the Communion, which you may use according to your Devotion and Leisure, not running them over in haste, or as saying a Task, but with all the Attention and Recollection of your Soul, desiring you ever to remember, that the Sacraments work their Effects, according to the disposition and preparation of the Receiver: So that, it is here, as with those who go to the Sea to fetch Water, every one brings according to the measure of the Vessel they carry with them. If you desire then plenty of Grace, see you carry your Heart well prepared, so large as not to be satisfied or filled with any thing but God himself.

An Act of FAITH.

MY Saviour Jesus Christ, I firmly believe Thou art really present in the Blessed Sacrament. I believe that it contains thy Body and Blood, accompanied with thy Soul and Divinity; I acknowledge these Truths; I believe these Wonders; I adore thy Power, which has wrought them; I praise thy Infinite Goodness, that has prepar'd them for me; and with *David*, I say from the bottom of my Heart, *I will praise Thee, my God, with my whole Heart, and I will recount all thy admirable Works. I will rejoyce in thee, and bless thy holy Name.* In this Faith, and with this Acknowledgment, I make bold to approach, at present, to this adorable Banquet, where thou bestowest on me this Divine Food of thy Body and Blood, that thou may'st fill me with thy Self and thy Holy Spirit, O Jesus, grant that I may approach to thee, with that true sense of Reverence and Humility, as is due to thy Infinite Majesty. Who am I, my God, that thou should'st work such great Wonders for my sake? Vouchsafe, at least, that I be not altogether unworthy of them,
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and that, at present, I may receive thee with a pure Heart, with a clear Conscience, and with a Sincere and True Faith. Pardon me my Sins, which have render'd me most unworthy to approach to thee. I detest them from the bottom of my Heart, because they are displeasing to thee, my God; I here renounce them for the future; and I promise to be faithful to Thee. Go on then, my Soul, raise thy self up to go and receive thy GOD, and with him to receive all the Favours he has prepar'd for thee in this Divine Sacrament.

Of HOPE.

IN thee, sweet Jesus, I place all my Hope, because Thou alone art my Salvation, my Strength, my Refuge, and the Fountain of all my Good: And were it not for this Confidence I have in thy Merits, and in thy precious Blood, with which thou redeemed'st me, how could I presume to partake of this Banquet! Encourag'd therefore by thy goodness, behold I come to Thee, as a poor and infirm Sheep to its Pasture, as one Sick to his Physician, as a condemn'd Criminal to his

his powerful Intercessor; that as the true Shepherd of my Soul, thou may'st strengthen me, heal me as my Physician, and as my merciful Advocate, deliver me from the Sentence of Sin and Death. This Abyss of nothing, which I am, calls upon the Abyss of Goodness, which thou art: For, though my Sins are many, and very grievous, yet all these are but light, and as nothing, if compared to thy Mercy, and the infinite ransom of thy Blood. 'Tis in this then, Lord, I put all my trust, and I am pleased, that in me there is nothing wherein I can hope that so I may put my whole trust in thee. Have pity therefore on me, my Jesus, and save me, for thou forsakest none that hope in thee.

Of CHARITY.

HOW great was the Force of thy Love, my dear Redeemer, when being to go out of this World to thy eternal Father, thou provid'st for us this Banquet, enrich'd with the Sweetness of Heaven and Delight of Angels! 'Twas a wonderful effect of thy Goodness, so to humble thy self for our Redemption

to take upon thee the Infirmary of our Nature. And is not this too, an infinite excess of thy Love, to leave us thy Body and Blood for the Food and Nourishment of our Souls, that so, as thou didst unite to thy Self our Humanity, we might be here Partakers of thy Divinity! For this thy Infinite Love to us, I desire to love thee, my Jesus, who art my only Comfort in this place of Banishment, the only Hope of my infirm Soul, and above all the Happiness I can enjoy in this Life. I love thee with all my Heart, with all my Soul, and with all my strength; and I wish that as every moment is an encrease of my Life, so it may be of the Love I have for thee: This it is I desire with all the Affections and Powers of my Soul, that as all is due, so all may be return'd to thee, for this *Divine Food*, which is our Refreshment, Support and Strength, our Armour and Defence in all our Miseries. And that this my Love may never cease, inflame my Heart with the Fire of Heaven, and there may it ever burn, till Nature and Corruption being weakned and consumed, I may be at length transformed into thee. Come my Lord, make haste, release me once more from the Bonds of Sin, and prepare me for the Blessing thou art now bestowing on me,

OF DESIRE.

AS the tired Hart Pants after the Fountains of Water, so does my Soul after thee my Saviour, my Lord, and my Jesus; it longs to come and drink of those Fountains which thy Love has opened for my Comfort and Relief. Tired therefore with my own Evil ways, I now return hungry and thirsty; I cry aloud after thee: Have mercy on me, O Son of God, and give me to taste of thy Banquet, that my Soul may be refresh'd. O that I had the Affections of the Blessed Spirits above, that my Soul might truly thirst after thee the Fountain of Life, Fountain of Wisdom, Fountain of Eternal Light, the impetuous Torrent of Celestial Happiness. O that my Soul did truly hunger after thee, the Bread of Angels, the Food of Blessed Souls, that all that is within me might be delighted with the taste of thy Sweetness. I here despise all human Comforts, that I may receive thee my only Good, my God and my Saviour, whom I love above all things, whom I desire to entertain within my Breast, with the Devotion and Affection

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Act of Desire before Comm. 99

on of those thy chosen Servants, who sit at thy Table of Bliss. And however I have been wanting hitherto in my Duty, and been unjust to thee, in misplacing my Affections, I now here put a stop to this my Folly and Weakness; and 'tis my hearty Request, that for the future, my Joy, my Relief, my Treasure, my Rest, may be intirely in thee. May I never desire any thing out of thee; may all other things seem contemptible and nothing, without thee, my GOD, my Delight, and the only Centre of my Heart.

OF THANKSGIVING.

WHO am I, my God of Infinite Goodness, that thou should'st admit me to partake of this Bread of Angels? Whence is it that I have found such Favour in thy sight, as to be the subject of this thy unspeakable Mercy? Come all you Angels and Saints of God, and I will tell you, how great things our Lord has done for my Soul: He has raised me out of the Dust, and delivered me from the Bonds of Sin; he has bid me be full of Comfort, and not to fear,

100 *Act of Thanksg. bef. Co.*

for that he will be my support and my strength : And though I have most unworthily forsaken him by my repeated Follies, he calls me yet again, and now, behold, invites me to eat of the Bread of Life, that as he has made me, so I may ever live by him. What thanks shall I give Thee, O merciful Jesu, Saviour of the World ? What shall I return Thee for all thou hast done for my Soul ? If a Man give all he has in acknowledgment of thy Love, 'tis all as nothing ; for thou Lord hast plentifully pour'd thy self forth upon me, and given me even all that thou art, thy Body, thy Blood, thy Soul, thy Divinity : And in if Thanksgiving for this Mercy I should lay before thee my Body and Soul, my Life, Liberty, and all I possess, what is this in regard of the Blessing thou here bestowest on me ? What is this to the Debt I owe, which is in some kind equal to what I receive, that is, Infinite as thy self ? O God, how far is this above my Stock ? However, I have one Request to make thee, for Thou art Good and Merciful, and know'st my Poverty ; That thou would'st vouchsafe to accept the little Offering I bring thee in all the Sincerity of my Heart, saying with the Holy Spouse. *My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved.* Thou hast mercifully given

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Act of Fear bef. Comm. 101

ven thy self to me, for the Food of my Soul ; and now behold, I offer to Thee all that I have, all that I am, all that I possess : To thee I make a full surrender, that being wholly thine, I may now no longer have a part in my self.

OF FEAR.

BEing now invited by Thee, my dear Jesus, and my chiefest Good, to come and partake of thy Banquet, I could willingly obey thy Call, and receive thee, with all the Love and Affection of my Soul ; but behold the more I think of this Happiness, the more I tremble at the sight of my Wickedness ; my Sins are always before me ; and when the Voice of St. Paul strikes my Ears, *He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks his own Damnation* ; How can I chuse but tremble, and be wholly seiz'd with Dread, when I think of approaching to thy Table ? Alas ! If I give my self but the Liberty to think, I am wholly lost within my own thoughts, and confounded to consider ; that having so often received this Divine Food, I am yet so frail and miserable, I have yet a Heart so little fixed on Thee, that 'tis

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102 *Act of Fear bef. Comm.*

ever wandring amidst Vanity and Folly, and seems rather fond of the empty satisfaction of Creatures than of Thee, my own Happiness. I have often resolved to amend, and as often pretended to make a new Covenant, receiving thy Blessed Body as the Pledge of my Engagement; and yet where am I still, but in the midst of Sin and Vice, with my Senses disorder'd, my Tongue ungovern'd, my Affections deprav'd? And, O God, how little care do I take to recover my self from this Misery, and return to thee, to whom I have so often promis'd to be Faithful! 'Tis the Thoughts of this which straiten me on every side, and cause an Anguish within my Soul; and 'tis for this, I fear, Lord, that what thou hast mercifully ordain'd for my Salvation, I should now receive to my Judgment and Condemnation. What then shall I do in these Difficulties; shall I fly from before thy Face, like despairing *Cain*? Or shall I hide my self with *Adam*, because, at the hearing thy Voice, I see my self poor and naked of all that is Good? No, my God, I will rather chuse to run to thee for Succour and Refuge, because I know thy Mercy exceeds my Misery, and thy Goodness is above all my Wickedness: If I am defil'd, infirm, and naked, thou
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Act of Fear bef. Comm. 103

can't cleanse me, cure and cloath me, To thee therefore I come, my God, with Fear and Trembling I take shelter under thy Goodness, still hoping that notwithstanding all my Wickedness, thou wilt pardon all my Iniquities, heal my Infirmities, and cloath me with thy Grace. For this end O Lord, disengage at present my Heart from all that distracts me in my Duty, and divides me from thee ; for I own ; That in all that tempts me, there's nothing but Vanity and Affliction of Spirit. May my Soul now no more relish any other Sweetness, but of thy Presence, let the taste of this be her only delight ; may she now admire nothing but the greatness of thy Infinite Love, and look for no other Content, but in thee the God of my Heart.

Of HUMILITY.

O Immense Powerful, and Incomprehensible God, who am I, that thou should'st vouchsafe thus to come to me, to be my Food, and take up thy Habitation within my Soul ! 'Tis in this I conceive something, how infinite thy Goodness and Mercy is, and how great my

104 *Act of Humi. bef. Comm.*

my Misery and Ingratitude. Thou art King of Kings, and Sovereign Lord over all Powers, at whose Presence the Earth trembles: Thou art the Fountain of Holiness, in whose sight the Angels are not pure: Thou art the Sun of Eternal Day, who dwellest in Light inaccessible: And I, what am I, but a poor Worm of the Earth, subject to many Miseries, distracted with Passions, fond of Vanity, defil'd with Sin, encompass'd with Darkness, busy about Folly, and careless of Eternity? How then shall I dare to come to thee, who am thus miserable and unprepar'd? With what Confidence shall I appear before thee, most just Judge, in whose presence the Pillars of Heaven shake? I, who by my Sins have found how to go away from thee, tho' thou art in every place: I, who have polluted my Soul, espous'd to thee in Baptism, with Filth and Wickedness, abandoning thee my Maker and Redeemer, for the love of Vanity and deceitful Delights. Thou indeed hast raised me out of nothing, and by thy Grace plentifully provided me of all means for being eternally happy; and how ill a return have I made for this Blessing, by my own Follies, living in Sin, and not at all solicitous to please thee, but only to satisfy my own corrupt Inclinations!

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Act of Humi. bef. Comm. 105

Thou has prepar'd me a Banquet of Heavenly Sweetness, and I have long'd after the Fleish-pots of Egypt. And yet still, O my God of infinite Goodness, behold, I come to speak to thee my Lord, being nothing but Dust and Ashes : Receive this thy unworthy Servant, and look on me with the Eyes of Compassion and Mercy, since with so much Love and Solitude, thou hast labour'd for my Conversion. Now I am sensible, O my God, that without Thee I am nothing, without I can do nothing, and if thou help me not with thy Grace, there is neither Life nor Salvation for me. Cast therefore all my Sins out of thy sight, and with the tenderness of a loving Father open thy Arms, to receive a Child, tho' unworthy, who comes to return to thee ; make me effectually experience the Truth of thy Prophet's Words, *That a Sacrifice to GOD is an afflicted Spirit, and that Thou wilt not despise a contrite and humble Heart.*

A Prayer

A PRAYER *before Receiving.*

WITH Fear and Trembling I approach to thy Banquet, O Jesu, having nothing to trust to but thy Goodness and Mercy, being of my self a Sinner, and void of all Vertue; for my Heart and Body are defiled with many Crimes, my Thoughts and Tongue in disorder, and under no Command. Being therefore thus straiten'd, O merciful God, and dreadful Majesty, I come to thee the Fountain of all Goodness, I make haste to thee, that I may be healed, I fly under thy Protection; hoping thou wilt be my Saviour, though I dare not stand before thee as my Judge. To thee I lay open all my Wounds; to thee I discover all my Shame. I confess my Sins are many and great, which makes me fear; but I hope in thy Mercies, which are infinite. Look therefore on me with the Eyes of Compassion, O Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King, God and Man, who was Crucified for the Sins of Men. Give ear to me, who put all my Trust in thee: Have

Prayers before Communi. 107

Have mercy on me full of Misery and Sin, thou Fountain of Goodness, that can never be exhausted. Hail, saving Victim, who for me and all Mankind was offered on the Cross. Hail generous and precious Blood, flowing from the Wounds of my Crucified Lord, and washing away the Sin of the World. Remember thy Creature, O God, whom thou hast redeemed by thy Blood. I am truly sorry for my Offences, and I heartily desire to amend. Take away therefore all my Sins, Blot out all my Iniquities, that purified in Soul and Body, I may worthily approach to the Holy of Holies; and grant, that this thy precious Body and Blood, which I now design, tho' unworthy, to receive, may be the forgiveness of my Sins, a full discharge from the Guilt of all my Crimes, a Victory over all ill Thoughts, the beginning of a new Life, the Seed of good Works, and a sure Protection of Soul and Body, against all the Snares of my Enemies.

Another

A N O T H E R.

Almighty and Everlasting God, behold, I come to the Sacrament of thy only Son our Lord Jesus Christ; I come as one Sick to the Physician of Life, as one unclean to the Fountain of Mercy, as one Blind to the Light of eternal Glory, as one poor and distress'd to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. And I beseech thee, in the excess of thy infinite Bounty, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to heal my infirmities, wash away all that defiles me, remove all my Blindness, relieve my Necessities, and cloath me with thy Grace; that I may receive thee, the Bread of Angels, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, with such Reverence and Humility, such Contrition and Devotion, such Purity and Faith, as may be for my Souls, Salvation. Grant I may receive not only the Sacrament of our Lord's Body, but Christ himself, who is the Power and Virtue of it; and that I may so partake of his Body, which he took of the Virgin *Mary*, that I may become a living Member of his Mystical Body. Grant, most loving Father, that this thy beloved Son, whom I now
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Prayers before Communi. 109

desire to receive, under the Veil of Bread;
I may one day enjoy in the full possession
of his Presence, and behold him Face to
Face, who liveth and reigneth with thee
in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, World
without end. *Amen.*

In time of Communion.

Q IS there any thing more to be observ'd
in time of Communion?

A. When a Person has duly prepar'd himself as above, he ought, in time of Communion, to have regard to two things; 1. To the interior employment of his Heart. 2. To a reverent and decent Behaviour of Body.

As to the first: While the *Confiteor* or *Confession* is saying, he ought to humble himself in the acknowledgment of his Unworthiness, and Confession of his being nothing but Dust and Ashes, and rather deserving, through his Sins, to be cast out of God's sight, than to be admitted to this Banquet. While the Priest gives the Absolution, let him, with all the fervour of his Soul, beg of God to purify his Heart in the entire remission of all his Sins; and when the Priest holds the

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Blessed Sacrament in his Hand, he ought, with the profoundest Adoration, to pay the Homage due to his Lord and Redeemer. At the repetition of those words, *Domine non sum Dignus*, Lord I am not worthy, let him again humbly confess his own Unworthiness, but then see it be immediately followed with the acknowledgment of God's Power, and a Confidence in his Goodness, going on with those Words, *But only speak the words, and my Soul shall be healed.*

And when he now receives the Blessed Sacrament within his Lips, then ought his Heart to be enflamed with Love, accompanied with a lively Faith, and firm Hope in the Goodness of his Lord: Then ought he to Adore and Praise his God and Redeemer, with all the Powers of his Soul; for since God of his infinite Goodness is pleas'd so far to make a Heaven of his Heart, as to come and reside there, what can he do less, than endeavour to make up that other Part of Heaven which belongs to the Angels and Blessed Spirits? And therefore, since they, in the presence of their Lord, fall down and adore him, giving Blessing and Glory, and Thanksgiving and Honour to him that sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever. This

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This same ought to be his Employment, and his Heart ought to pour it self forth in the presence of its God, giving Praise, Jubilation and Honour, and offering it self to him for a Throne for ever.

Q. And what now is he to observe, as to his Body ?

A. 1. He is to be fasting from Midnight forward, so that he must have taken nothing down, either of Meat, Drink, Physick, &c. except it be in any extremity of Sickness, when the Sacrament may be received by way of *Viaticum*, or Preparation for a Good Death, even not fasting.

2. As to his *Habit*, he ought to be decently attir'd, so as to be free from all appearance of *Vanity*, and yet not to be censur'd for any *Irreverence* or *Disrespect*. And therefore, as they are highly to be condemn'd, who approach to this Holy Table, powder'd, patch'd, perfum'd, bare-neck'd, or any otherways so set forth, as seems more suitable for a Ball, or such like prophane Entertainment, than for the commemorating the Death and Passion of our Lord, in so solemn and sacred a Rite as this : So they likewise are to be severely censur'd, who present themselves before their Lord in such a disrespectful Undress, that it would be an affront to

the meanest Friend, to wait on them in such an Undecent manner as this seems to be, which can be called nothing less, than *stepping out of Bed to the Altar*. It were to be wish'd therefore that these two Extreame could be avoided, and that Christians would take care to come to this holy Banquet, in such a manner as might seem *decent*, and yet not be *vain*.

Being thus habited then, and going now to the Holy Table, every thing ought to be laid aside, that can give any disturbance to himself or others, as Book, Hat, Gloves, Sword, Stick, Fan, Muff, Mask, &c. then taking the Towel and holding it before his Breast, without putting it to his Mouth, either before or after Receiving, let him kneel *upright*, not gazing about, but with his Eyes shut, or Reverently bent downwards; and in this posture, having his Lips moderately open, let him receive the Host on his Tongue, touching the inside of his under Lip, and so bring it into his Mouth, and moistning it something, let it down, without chewing or raising it to the Roof of his Mouth. And let him be careful not to snatch back his Head immediately upon receiving the Sacred Host, not bend downwards, nor raise the Towel to his Lips,

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After Communion. 113

Lips, but continue the whole time with his Body erect and fixt. And if the H. Particle should by accident, stick to the Roof of his Mouth, let him not be disquieted, but remove it easily, and convey it down.

After Communion.

HAVING now in this manner receiv'd the H. Communion, he ought to retire for a while, and shutting out all Worldly Thoughts from his Heart, there treat with his Lord, and not leave him till he have obtained his Blessing.

Q. I have seen many, as soon as they have received, at least as soon as Mass is ended, immediately rise up and go their way, or else fall to discoursing with some Acquaintance: And is this well?

A. I have seen likewise too many do thus, and have been as often troubled to see it; for what benefit can they reap by their Communion, who refuse to entertain their Lord who comes to visit them? They receive him indeed within their Breast, and he is no sooner come in, but they immediately turn their Backs on him: And can they have any af-

fection of Love, or sense of Piety in their Soul ?

Q. But if any Business presses, what can they do ? And is it not the Case of many Servants, that have not their own time to command, but are expected home ?

A. I Wish there were no others in this haste, but such as seem to think themselves obliged to be so. But I fear, all this pretext of Business will be found generally no more than an Excuse for Neglect, Trepidity and Indevotion ; for what greater Business can any have than to Entertain their Lord, and treat with him concerning the Affairs of their Soul : ought not all other Affairs, especially at this time, give way to this ? What great hindrance can one little Quarter of an Hour be ? It must be a very nice business which will not Admit of such a Delay, especially if a Man contrives and lays his Affairs beforehand ? and how often happens it, that a Man leaving his Devotion thus done by halves, upon this Pretext of haste, meets with a Friend, Relation, Fellow-servant in his way, and entering upon a Discourse with him, shews his business can stay a while, or at least, that it can suffer no prejudice by any delay, but such as is occasion'd by Prayers ?

After Communion. 115

ers? But however, if it so happens, that a Man be oblig'd at this time to leave his Devotion, he ought to remember what he does, when he is call'd out from Dinner, that is, return to it again as soon as he can, and make an end of what he left imperfect.

Q. What is the Devotion proper after Receiving?

A. Such Prayers as are appointed for this time, in the ordinary Books of Devotion, if said with Attention and Devotion. But if a Man, immediately after Receiving, turns presently to these, and runs them over slightly, as some seem to do, out of Custom, and then rise up and go their way, without taking time to digest this Holy Food, or reflect on what they have done, how fruitless must their Communion be? You may remember, the end for which a Christian is to approach to this Holy Table, is, that Receiving the Body and Blood of his Redeemer, *Christ may abide and dwell in him.* Now can any one possibly imagine this slight, negligent and disrespectful way of treating his Lord, is the proper means of obtaining this Favour of *Christ's abiding and dwelling with him*? He runs away from his Lord, and can he expect his Lord should abide with him? Harken to the Method

116 *After Communion.*

of the Gospel : *He that eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, abides in me, and I in him.* Wilt thou then, that thy Lord abide in thee ? Abide thou in him. This it is he absolutely requires ; and believe me, those who neglect to do thus, thinking it tedious to stay a while with their Lord, can expect little of this Blessing, but have too great reason to fear, that they no sooner forsake this their Heavenly Guest, but he likewise forsakes them.

Q. Pray, what mean you by *Christ abiding in us.*

A. I mean, that as a person lives by the Food which he eats, so a Christian that eats of this Bread of Life, which is Christ, should live by Christ, and so have him abiding in him. So that having received Christ, he ought now no longer to act according to the *Principles of Corrupt Nature*, nor be guided by his *Passions*, but being quite dead to all these, act wholly according to this *new Principle of Life*, and make it appear to all with whom he converses, that 'tis not now he Lives, but Christ lives in him. Now this supposes an entire change of Life and Manners, and 'tis so great and even wonderful a Work, that it requires a powerful assistance of the Divine Guest, who comes
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After Communion. 117

not only to visit, but likewise to comfort and strengthen the Soul, and raise it above its ancient self. But then is it not very necessary, that, after Communion, a person should treat with his Lord about these Affairs, lay before him his Necessities, beg his Help and Grace; consider what he was, what he has to amend, and what he ought to be; as likewise the great care he ought to take on his part, for not relapsing into his former Follies, and going from the Communion Table, not to begin again where he left off, in all the same Weaknesses, the same Neglects, the same Sins and ill Customs?

Q. What Devotions then do you recommend after Communion, for the obtaining this good effect in the Soul, which you here speak of?

A. The Prayers already mention'd, with other Holy Exercises of *Oblation, Petition, Adoration, &c.* Which I'll here put down at large for your Direction and Help.

Prayers after Communion.

I Give thee Thanks, Eternal Father, for that of thy pure Mercy, without any Deserts of mine, thou hast been pleas'd to feed my Soul with the Body and Blood of thy only Son our Lord Jesus Christ. And I beseech thee, that this Holy Communion may not be to my condemnation, but an effectual remission of all my Sins. May it strengthen my Faith, encourage me in all that is good, deliver me from my vicious Customs, remove all Concupiscence, perfect me in Charity and Patience, in Humility and Obedience, and all other Virtues: May it secure me against all the Snares of my Enemies, visible or invisible; Prudently moderate my Inclinations both Carnal and Spiritual, closely unite me to thee the only and true God, and happily settle me in unchangeable Bliss. And I now make it my hearty Request, that thou wilt one Day admit me, tho' an unworthy Sinner, to be a Guest at that Divine Banquet, where Thou, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, art the true light, eternal Fulness, everlasting Joy, and perfect

Prayers after Communi. 119

perfect Happiness of all the Saints ; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A N O T H E R.

Wound now dear, Jesus, my Heart and all that is within me, with thy Love and perfect Charity, that my Soul may languish and melt away with the desires of thee ; may all my Affections be fixt on Thee the eternal Good ; may my Thoughts ever dwell in thy Mansions of Happiness, and my Soul now long to *be dissolv'd* and be with thee. Grant, O my God, that my Heart may now ever hunger after Thee the Bread of Angels, the Banquet of Blessed Souls, our daily and Divine Bread, abounding in all Sweetness that can possibly delight the Taste. May my Soul now delight and feed on thee, and my Bowels be filled with thy Sweetness, who art the Bliss of the Angels : May my Soul ever thirst after thee the Fountain of Life, the Fountain of Wisdom and Knowledge, the Fountain of Eternal Light, the Torrent of Divine Pleasure, and Fulness of the House of God ; may she ever desire thee, seek thee, find thee, and go on till she happily

120 *Prayers after Communi.*

happily comes to thy Presence : May her Thoughts be always on thee ; of thee may she speak, and perform all her Actions to the Praise and Glory of thy Name, and this with Humility and Discretion, with Love and Delight, with Ease and Affection, and so persevere on to the end. Thus maist thou alone be my Hope, my Strength, my Treasure, my Delight, my Sweetness, my Joy, my Quiet, my Peace, my Food, my Refuge, my Help, my Wisdom, my Portion and Possession, in whom my Thoughts and Heart may be ever fix'd, so as not to be in the power of any Creature to divide me from thee.

Praise and Adoration.

BE thou blessed, my God, for the many Favours thou hast now bestowed on me, and for all the Blessings with which thou hast enriched my Soul, after the great Miseries and Wants which I suffer'd, when by my Pleasures and Passions I had departed from thee. Was not I most miserably Blind, when I sought Content and Happiness out of thee ; when by my Follies, Neglects and Indevotion I remov'd my self at a distance from

Praise and Adoration. 121

from thee ? But thy goodness was such, that it withdrew me from the Precipice, whither I was running, enlightning me with thy Rays, and calling me back to thee by thy Grace. Thou hast pardoned me all my Sins ; and for the accomplishment of all these Favours, thou hast come now to visit me, that thou maist for ever abide with me, and I with thee. O my God, be thou blessed for all these infinite Mercies.

Bless our Lord, my Soul, and let all that is within me praise and magnifie thy Holy Name.

Bless our Lord, and see thou forget not the Favours he has now done for thee.

Thy Lord, my Soul, who has pardon'd thee all thy Offences, and cur'd thy Infirmities.

Who has preserv'd thee from Death, and crown'd thee with the effects of his Bounty.

Who has satisfied thy Hunger with good things, and replenished thee with all the Blessings thou could'st wish.

And ought'st not thou to resolve on a change of Life, and renewing thy Forces, grow young like an Eagle in the Service of thy God ?

Let thy Grace then, O Lord, be ever assisting to me, for the Experience of my
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122 Praise and Adoration.

own Weakness makes me fearful of my self, and if thou supportest me not, shall not I most certainly fall again? Be Thou therefore my Shield and my Defence, and for this end give me a firm and constant Faith; augment and strengthen it, not only in respect of this Mystery, but also in regard of all other Christian Truths and Principles of Eternal Life; that by the help of this Faith I may overcome all Difficulties that shall meet me in my Journey to the state of Bliss; for 'tis by such a Faith, those who for my example, are gone before me, have triumph'd over their Enemies, have done Justice, and obtain'd the Promises.

Of H O P E.

I Adore thee, O infinite Greatness, O Divine Majesty, who fill'st both Heaven and Earth, and art ador'd by all the blessed Spirits, Angels and Saints, who, without ceasing, praise and cry out before thee, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabbath.* How is it possible thou should'st stoop so low, as to come to me the most unworthy of all thy Servants, and desire to dwell within me? If the Heavens, and
Heaven

Acts of Hope after Com. 123

Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain thee, how much less this Habitation, which I have prepared for thee? But thy Goodness, O great God, knows well how to humble it self, when 'tis for our good; Thou know'st how to conceal the dazzling Splendors of thy Glory, and condescend to our weak Capacity, that so thou may'st communicate thy self more freely to us. This thou didst begin to do in thy adorable Incarnation, in which thou mad'st thy self like to us, so the more forcibly to draw our Love to thee. And this Method thou hold'st on in this Mystery, in which thou giv'st thy self to us for the Food and Nourishment of our Souls, thus more closely to unite us to thy self, and make us aspire to that Cœlestial Banquet thou hast made for the blessed in Heaven. O God, grant me thy Grace, that I may daily more and more long after this Eternal Banquet, that the desire of enjoying it may make me despise all the Goods and pleasures of this Life, and labour continually to prepare my self, till I happily be admitted amongst thy Guests.

I have one Resolution, which at present I here make before thee, and 'tis, To renounce all whatsoever my irregular and corrupt Affections encline me to. I confess, they often press me to forsake the

124 *Acts of Hope after Com.*

the way of thy Commandments, and put me in danger of losing all right to eternal Happiness; but behold, I now desire to discharge my Heart from them, that I may love thee alone, and place my whole Trust in thee. For this end I firmly resolve to watch over all my Actions, fly from Sin, and avoid whatever may be displeasing to thee. I will labour to work my Salvation by keeping thy Precepts; and as I resolve, so I hope to be faithful to thee: But this Resolution, I acknowledge, I am not able to perform, without the assistance of thy Grace; and therefore I most humbly beg it of thee. O Jesus, save me; carry me through the ways of thy Commandments, which I now begin and undertake with all my Heart: Incline my Heart to make me love thy Divine Truths; divert my Eyes that they may not see Vanity; Enliven and strengthen me in the Path of Virtue and good Works, and powerfully draw me to thee, that so I may follow thee as far as Heaven, where thou livest and reignest for all Eternity.

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O My God, what Return shall I make for this so signal Favour, and what shall I do to acknowledge it? Is it possible I should not continually love thee, after this Excess of Love, which thou hast shewn to me! Thou hast lov'd me to that degree, as to lay down thy Life for my sake, and shall not I make this return at least, as only to live for thee? Thou hast communicated thy self at present wholly to me, and shall not I from henceforth be wholly thine? permit me not, O God, to be ungrateful, nor insensible of this thy Love and my own Salvation. I protest therefore before thee, that for the future I will be faithful to thee, and never depart from thee by any Disobedience to thy Law: I will never forget thy Bounty, nor the Favour thou hast done me, in admitting me to partake of thy Mercy. I will love thee with all my Heart, my God, my Saviour, my Strength, my Support, my Refuge, and my Deliverer. Thou art my God and my All. What is there in Heaven or Earth I should love besides thee?
Thou

126 *Act of Love before Com.*

Thou art the God of my Heart, the Inheritance and only Happiness I pretend to: I have made choice of thee, and nothing shall prevail on me, to make me change.

An Oblation.

WHat shall I give thee, O my Saviour, as an earnest of that Love, which I have here now engag'd to thee? I have nothing worthy of thee, and if I had, I have nothing but what is thine on several Accounts: But such is thy Goodness, thou art willing to accept from us what is thy own already. Wherefore, behold I here offer my self to Thee, my Body, and Soul, which are now Sanctified by the honour of thy Divine presence: I consecrate them both to Thee, since at present thou hast chosen them to be thy Temple; my Body to be employ'd in thy Service, and never more to be an instrument of Sin; my Soul to know thee, to love thee, and evermore to be faithful to thee. Bless, O Lord, the Present I here make thee, *Benedic Domine domum istam*: Permit not that my Body be any more defil'd with sensual delights, nor my

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An Oblation after Com. 137

my Soul by a Will to commit any Mortal Sin. For my part, I here resolve to serve thee with Body and Soul; I will take pains to correct their evil inclinations; I will fight against my self, renounce my wanted Pleasures, my Delights, my Passions, my Concupiscence, my Anger, my Pride, my Self-Love, my own Will, and lastly, whatever may offend thee my God.

A PRATER.

D*omine Deus, custodi in aeternum hanc voluntatem.* Preserve in my Soul, O my God, this holy Resolution thou hast here given me, and grant me Grace faithfully to put it in Execution. I can do nothing of my self, and without thy assistance: I therefore beg it of thee with all my heart, that I may conquer all the Difficulties I shall meet with in the way of my Salvation. Regard me with the Eyes of Mercy, have compassion on my Weakness, and strengthen me daily with thy Grace.

Glorious Virgin, joyn with me in giving Thanks to thy beloved Son, who has refresh'd my Soul with the Banquet
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of his own most precious Body, and restor'd me to his Grace : Offer him all the grateful Service thou didst him in thy life, to supply the Defects of my Devotion, and obtain of him, that he depart not from me, without leaving a large Benediction behind him for my Soul.

Holy Angels, ministring Spirits of God, behold the only Son of the Eternal Father, whom you ador'd at his entrance into the World ; become now Petitioners for me, that I may from henceforth serve him with the same Spirit and Truth, as you did while he was yet on Earth, and with the same cheerfulness as you now do in his Cœlestial Kingdom.

All ye Men and Women, Saints of God, see here within my Breast your Lord, the Beginning and Reward of all your Good and all your Happiness, and let now your Prayers accompany mine to his Throne, that by his Grace I may follow your steps, in the exact performance of every Duty, till abounding in Good Works, I may be at length admitted to your Company, and possess my Jesus for all Eternity.

CONCLUSION.

GRaciously hear all my Prayers, O good Jesu, hide me within thy Wounds, and there shelter me from all my Enemies; let nothing divide me from thee: Call me at the hour of my Death, and command me to come to thee, that with thy Saints, I may praise thee for ever.

And now, Lord Jesus, I go from thee for a while, but I hope not without thee, my Comfort, my Happiness, and all the Good of my Soul. To thy Love and Protection I recommend my self, as likewise my Brethren, Relations, my Country, my Friends and my Enemies. Love us, O Lord, change our Hearts, and transform us into Thee. May I be wholly employ'd in Thee and for Thee, and may thy Love be the End of all my Works, of all my Thoughts and Actions, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Such

Such as have opportunity, on the Day of Communion, of retiring to their Prayers, would do well to seek some Devotion proper for that time, as the Exercise of the most necessary Virtues, set down in the Manual of Poor Man's Devotion, or such other Books, the following Aspirations, likewise, may not be unseasonable, if said with recollection of Spirit and Attention.

I.

ENlighten, O Lord, the Eyes of my Soul with the light of Faith and Wisdom, that I may ever look on thee, my Redeemer, as the Way, the Rule and Example of all my Life.

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What am I, Lord, and what is my Father's House, that thou should'st thus follow me with thy Blessings! I was created by thee and for thee; and may'st thou ever be the rest and Centre of my Soul.

Good Jesu, my Hope and only Refuge, I here render thee thanks for all thy Sufferings, and beg, I may ever find shelter in thy Wounds against all my Enemies: Imprint the Memory of them deep in my heart, that I may love thee, and in all my Sufferings never forget what thou hast suffer'd for me.

Take from me all self-love, and give me a perfect love of thee; that I may now be more faithful in every Duty, and let nothing for the future put me out of my way.

O, that I could ever remember thee, think of thee alone, and love thee only.

O that my Senses were ever shut against all Vanity and Sin; my Mind freed from all fruitless Solitude and Care, that I might ever abide in thee.

From henceforth I will with all diligence seek thee, my only Good; my Desires shall be fixt on thee, all my Actions shall be directed to thy Glory.

And my Will I now resign into thy hands; desiring that thy Will may be done in me, both now and for ever.

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Be thou my instructor, Director and Helper in all things, that I may neither do, speak, think, or desire any thing, but what is according to thy Good Will.

II.

I am thy Servant, O Lord, give me Understanding, that I may learn the way of thy Commandments, and lay aside all interest beside that of Heaven.

O sweet Jesu, Fountain of all Goodness, guide my steps in thy Paths, and teach me to do thy Will.

Disengage my heart from all unprofitable Solicitude and vain Affection, and tho' I live amongst Creatures, yet may I ever live in thee and for thee?

Give me a true fervor of Spirit, and kindle in my breast that fire, which thou cam'st to bring upon the Earth, that I may find no rest but in thee.

How sweet, O Lord, is thy Spirit, how pleasant to my Lips are the words of thy mouth: O that I could ever be mindful of them, to fulfil thy Law!

Make me die to the world, and all its Concupiscences; and let the greatness of thy love, make all that is earthly, appear as nothing to me.

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Protect me against all my Enemies and in all dangers appear in my defence; make haste to help me, O God, and say to my Soul, I am thy Health and Salvation.

Remember thou art my Father, and have compassion on my poor distress'd Soul; cloath her with all Vertues, and feed her with thy grace: for it belongs to a Father to take this care of his Child.

In thee I live, sweet Jesu, in thee I desire to die; both living and dying I will ever profess, that thou art good, and thy Mercy endures for ever.

III.

O sweetness of my heart, and Life of my Soul, take off my Heart and Thoughts from all Creatures, that all my comfort may be in thee.

My God and only Hope, how long dost thou permit me to run from thee! When wilt thou consume in me all that is corrupt and contrary to thy Will.

Draw me after thee, I beseech thee, that I may cheerfully run in the way of thy Precepts.

Make me one according to thy own heart, and let my Soul be now thy habitation for ever.

My Soul without thee, is dry like Earth without Water, moisten it with the dew of Heaven; and give me a Large blessing from the Land of the Living.

Wound my Heart with thy love, that it may now relish nothing that is Earthly, but entirely depend on thy Will.

Hail, dear Redeemer, I now desire to adore thee with the Spirit and Affection of all thy Elect; I commit to thy direction all the motions of my Soul.

O my Love and my Joy, when will the day of Eternity appear, when laying down this weight of Flesh, I shall joyn with thy Saints in thy everlasting praise!

O sweet Light of Heaven, enflame my heart with the Fire of Charity: I offer thee all that is within me; let that divine Flame consume my Bowels.

IV.

O that I could now give thee, O Lord, all that Praise, Glory and Honour, with which the Angels and Blessed Spirits praise and glorify thee in Heaven: But because I am unable to do this, accept at least this my desire and good will.

Deliver me, O God, from every thing that is contrary to thy Will, and be pleas'd so to dispose my Soul, as may be for thy greater Glory.

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I surrender my self, O my Creator, into thy hands, and laying aside all private Wishes, I desire to depend on thee, as to the whole State of my Body and Soul, as to Offices, Places, all Accidents, Events, and whatever else thou shalt please to appoint for me.

I ask nothing but that thy Name may be glorify'd for ever: And if thou wilt please to admit me, tho' unworthy, to have a share in paying thee thy Homage, blessed be thy Name.

If it be more for thy Honour, That I suffer interior Desolation, I accept it from thy hand, O God; knowing, 'tis for my Good whatsoever I suffer in my Soul for love of thee.

O Love, how little art thou known, how little art thou lov'd! Come to me, and if thou no where findest rest, infuse thy self wholly into my Soul. May the Fire of thy Love, O God, ever burn in my heart, and grow up to such a flame, that it may burn and consume not only the Sacrifice, but the Altar too.

Let nothing be now my comfort, but thou my Lord Jesus, and nothing afflict me but my Sins, and whatever is displeasing to thy Divine Majesty.

O Blessed Jesu, Life eternal, by whom I live, and without whom I die; Grant
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that I may now be united to thee, and that in the Embraces of thy holy Love and divine Will, I may rest for ever.

When shall I see thee, O sweet Lord, when shall I appear before thy Face! When shall I see thee in the Land of the Living! Till then I sigh and bewail my Banishment, desiring to be dissolved, and be with thee.

Instructions for Communion.

Q. **W**ould you have every one after Communion say all these Prayers?

A. I think 'tis very fitting every one should continue in Prayer, after Receiving, near a quarter of an hour, and employ this time in the best manner they can, for the benefiting their Souls by this holy Food. These Prayers may do very well for this end, but, let every one chuse in this Case the Devotion they find most for their advantage.

Q. And for the rest of the Day, how ought it to be spent?

A. Something different certainly from other Days; that is, in more Reading, Praying, Recollection of Mind, in Pious
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and Charitable Offices, and good Works, and consequently in carefully avoiding vain Divertisements, uncharitable and unprofitable Discourses, and all such Company, Entertainments, and Publick Houses, as generally expose Men to much more liberty than is becoming such Days of Devotion.

Q. What time is to be observ'd in communicating?

A. There can be no one Rule for all People in this point; but that which agrees with most States and Conditions of Men, is to communicate once every Month. Others may receive oftner, with the Advice of their Director; but then let them remember, that their Life and care of living well, be answerable to this their Devotion.

Q. Why are Christians to communicate thus often.

A. That by this holy Food, they may learn to love God, be purified from their Imperfections, be deliver'd from their Miseries, be comforted in their Afflictions, and strengthen'd in their weakness. Thus *St. Francis Sales*; And therefore he says, There are two sorts of Persons ought to communicate often; the *Perfect*; because being well dispos'd, they do themselves Wrong, in not approaching

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to the Fountain of Perfection; the *Imperfect*, that they may be able justly to pretend to Perfection: The *Strong*, lest they become feeble; The *Feeble*, that they may become strong; The *Sick*, to be heal'd; the *Sound*, lest they fall into *Sickness*: Those that have *not much Worldly Business*, because they have leasure; and those that *have much Business*, because they are in more need of this spiritual Refreshment.

Q. What may be the reason many receive but little benefit by their Communicating?

A. It must be either for want of due Preparation, or for leaving their Devotion, as soon as they have Receiv'd, and not giving time for this holy Food to digest and work its Effects in their Souls. Take care therefore, as often as you communicate, to prepare your self in the best manner you can. Give due time to your Devotion, after you have Receiv'd, and when you go Home, let it be your care to amend all your Evil Habits, and make use of the Graces you have receiv'd by means of this B. Sacrament: Thus will it be for your advancement in all Vertue, and the love of God, and be an eternal Blessing to your Soul.

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An Abridgment of the precedent Instructions, in Two or Three Questions and Answers, which every one ought to be able to give an Account of, before they are admitted to these Sacraments.

Q. **W**Hat is the first thing a person is to do, that desires to go to the Sacrament of Penance?

A. He is in the first place to beg the grace of God for the due examination of his Conscience; then he is wholly to apply his Thoughts to the looking into the State of his Soul, and making his Examination, pag. 5. 6.

Q. When he has finish'd his Examination, and call'd to mind all his Sins, is he upon this, now prepar'd to go to Confession?

A. No, he is not; for he is first to endeavour to stir up in his Soul a hearty Sorrow and Contrition for his Sins, and
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by Prayers and Tears labour to obtain it of God. And having then made firm Resolutions of a change of Life, he may upon this, go to Confession, *p. 20.*

Q. And having ended his Confession, what is he to do?

A. He is to return to his Prayers; first to thank God for the benefit of Absolution; secondly, to beg Grace for the putting in execution all his good Purposes and Resolutions, *p. 47.*

Q. And having ended this Prayer, may he go forthwith to the Holy Communion?

A. No, he ought first to apply himself to a more particular Preparation for that Holy Banquet, *p. 89.*

Q. After he has Receiv'd, what is he to do?

A. He is to return again to his Prayers, both for Thanksgiving, and the obtaining the Grace of Perseverance in all Good.

INSTRUCTIONS

F O R

Confirmation.

Confirmation is a Sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, to make us *Perfect Christians*; and it is so called, because it gives to them that receive it, if duly dispos'd, a great inward strength, a holy Vigor of Spirit, a firm Constancy, of Mind, for the exact discharging every Duty that belongs to a Christian Life, and happily finishes in them that which Baptism had begun, making them of Infants in Christianity, to become Perfect Men, and not fear Persecutions, or Death it self, for the sake of Christ.

Q. What

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Q. What is it that is used in the administration of this Sacrament?

A. As water is made use of in Baptism, so Chrism is used in Confirmation, which is a Compound, made of Oyl and Balm. The *Oyl* signifies that Sweetness, that Tenderness and Mercy, which every one that is confirmed ought to have ever in their Hearts, Words, and Carriage towards their Neighbours, and even towards their Enemies. The *Balm* represents the good Odour or sweet Savour of Innocency, and a holy Life, with which they ought to be filled. The Form or words used in conferring this Sacrament, are these: *I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of Salvation. in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Q. In what manner is this Sacrament administred?

A. The persons that are to be confirmed kneel down before the Altar, where the Bilhop makes the sign of the Cross with the Chrism on their Foreheads, because 'tis in that part the effects of *Fear* and *Shame* shew themselves most, and 'tis to teach them that are confirmed, that they never ought to be afraid, to confess Christ Crucified; that neither Fear nor Shame ought to hinder them from an open profession of the Maxims of the Gospel,

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pel, when by Company or ill example they are press'd to renounce in their words or Actions, the Glorious Title of a Christian.

After this, the Bishop gives them a little blow on the Cheek, so to imprint in their Minds, that from this time they begin to be Soldiers of Jesus Christ, and are to be ready to suffer, all Affronts, Injuries, Contradictions from Men, and so make profession of their Faith, with that Courage and Meekness, as Christ has commanded and given Example in the Gospel.

Lastly the Bishop gives them the Peace, saying, *Peace be with you*; to signify, that if they desire Peace with God, and within themselves, it must be by suffering patiently all the Troubles and Persecutions that happen to them in the practice of Virtue.

Q. Where may the Effects of this Sacrament be seen?

A. In the person of the Apostle who as soon as *Judas* had betray'd their Master, presently abandon'd him, and withdrew into such places where they might best secure themselves against the Persecution, that then seem'd to threaten them: Thus fearful were they at that time. But after they had been confirmed on *Whitsunday*, by the Holy Ghost coming down upon them

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them, they were so fill'd with that Courage, Force, and Virtue of the Holy Spirit, that they publickly Preach'd the Doctrine of him, who had been Crucified, and in whom they had been but just before so shamefully scandaliz'd; now concluding with themselves, that the greatest Happiness that could come to them, was to dye for his sake, and in the Defence of the Gospel.

Q. What Dispositions ought Christians to bring along with them, in order to the worthy receiving and partaking of the effects of this Sacrament?

A. 1. They are to be careful that they be free from the Guilt of all mortal Sin, and therefore they are to prepare themselves by a good Confession. 2^{dly}. They ought to be well instructed in the Mysteries of Faith, and in particular in what concerns this Sacrament, as to the *Effects* and *Grace*, which they expect to receive by it. 3^{dly}. They ought to go with their Souls full of *Faith* and *Hope* in God, with a firm Confidence that they shall receive the Holy Ghost invisibly in their Hearts, and be strengthen'd with a true Christian Courage, which shall carry them through all Difficulties, as to the profession of their Faith, and through all Duties which belong to the Followers and Disciples of Christ

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Christ crucified. 4thly. In consideration of that fulness of Grace, which they expect to receive in this Sacrament, they will do well to dispose themselves some days before, by more than ordinary Prayers, by Fasting, Alms, and other good Works. And being thus instructed and prepar'd, they may be presented to the Bishop.

Q. What are the Prayers proper for a person to say before he is Confirm'd?

A. The Hymn and prayers set down in the Manuals, for invoking the assistance of the Holy Ghost, as, *Come Holy Ghost, &c. Veni Sancte Spiritus, &c. Veni Creator Spiritus, &c.* He may likewise, within his own Thoughts, lay before Almighty God all the Necessities and Weaknesses to which he is subject, and then sollicite Heaven to send down the Holy Spirit into his Heart, to be his Comforter and Defence, and to secure him against all dangers, which he sees before him, whether occasion'd by his own Infirmary, or the repeated Assaults of his Enemies; as something after this form.

A PRAYER *before* *Confirmation.*

I Come here this Day, my Sovereign Lord and Redeemer, to list my self a Soldier under the Standard of thy Cross. But when I consider my Weakness, and reflect how infirm and faithless I am, I am fill'd with Confusion and Shame, and cannot but reproach my self with the rashness of the Undertaking; for, How can I pretend to offer my self to fight thy Battels, to suffer in thy Cause, to be ready to accept of Poverty, Distress, Chains, or Death, in defence of thy Faith, and with Liberty and Life to assert the Right of thy Gospel, whilst the little Occasions and Tryals I daily meet with, convince me of my want of Courage, and make me yield before them? For alas! how often is it, that a slight Word or imagin'd Contempt overcomes all my Patience? How often does Cowardice and Shame put me by the doing many a commendable Office, nay, and make me omit many a pressing Duty? And is it not almost every Day, that,

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A Prayer before Confir. 147

that, for human Respects, and in compliance with Company, I am prevail'd on to do that which is unreasonable, of ill example, and too often what is scandalous too? And while I thus experience my want of Courage, of Fidelity and Trust, with what Face of Reason can I pretend to offer my self to become thy Soldier! No, my God, I confess I have no ground or reason for it, and therefore, acknowledging how unqualified and unfit I am for this Service, I here revoke what I have said, and only lay before thee my Desires, my Wishes and Good-Will. Thou know'st, O God, these my Desires, and the Inclinations of my Heart, that though I am unable of my self to perform any of the Duties that belong to thy faithful Servants and true Followers of the Cross, yet that I sincerely desire to become fit and qualified for the exact discharging all those Obligations that belong to this Character: And 'tis for this end I now come to offer my self to Thee.

And however weak and indispos'd I am, yet in the first place I here confess and firmly believe, that thou art able to remove all Infirmities; and inspire me with Strength; Thou, who commandedst

148 *A Prayer before Confir.*

mandedst the Light to shine out of Darkness, canst perfect these Earthen Vessels, and make them become the Temples of the Holy Ghost; thou canst raise them by thy Spirit above the Earth, shew in them the Excellency of thy Power, even the Power of Heaven, and thus make them superior to all Difficulties, safe in Dangers, and fit for all Duties.

I moreover hope, and come with a great Confidence in thy Goodness, that thou wilt look on me with all the tenderness of a loving Father, and send down at present the Holy Ghost into my Heart: For since thou hast promis'd to give this good Spirit to those that ask it, and so solemnly bestowed it on thy Followers, by the imposition of Hands, I cannot but hope to be now made the Subject of this thy Goodness, and the Instrument of thy Power.

Come then, O Holy Ghost, who replenishest the Hearts of the Faithful, descend into my Soul, and make it the place of thy abode, remove from me all Vicious Shame, and inspire me with a Christian Courage; strengthen me against all the Assaults of Self-love, the Flesh and
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A Prayer before Confir. 149

the World ; make me bold in every Duty, and only fear to Sin ? Let nothing perswade me to contemn or forsake thy Law ; let the Attempts of Flattery or Terror be equally vain and fruitless upon me, and let me now drink so deep of this Torrent of Sweetness, that neither Chains nor Rocks may be able to force me from my Duty ; but that, like the Blessed Apostles, those thy true Soldiers, I may even rejoyce in suffering for thee : Thus, however weak in my self, shall I be made Strong in thee ; thus shall I become thy Soldier too, and only thus. Come then, O Holy Ghost, with all thy gifts, and fill my Soul.

Q. After they have been Confirm'd what are they to do ?

A. Not to depart immediately, but stay some time, *1.* To give Thanks for the Blessing receiv'd ; *2dly*, To beg a continuance of this Grace, that the Holy Ghost may be so truly settled in their Hearts, that on all occasions they may be ever sensible of his Divine Assistance ; and lastly, make sincere Resolutions of living according to the Perfection, which, this Sacrament requires ; that is according

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to the Spirit of a true and perfect Christian.

Q. Is it then according to this Spirit every person ought to live after he is confirm'd ?

A. He is most certainly oblig'd to this; and therefore, tho' every one may in some manner excuse the Weakness, the Cowardice, and the being mov'd by human Respects in baptiz'd Persons, who have not yet been Confirm'd; yet there can be no such Excuse in regard of those Christians who have receiv'd this Sacrament, it being the principal design and effect of this holy Institution, as Faith teaches us, to strengthen them against the Snares and Power of the Devil, the World and the Flesh, to take away from them the fear of Men, to make them confess openly, that they are only to consider the sacred Rules of the Gospel, esteem only Jesus to be their Master, and enter into no other Warfare but his; and that they will act thus not only before Persecutors or Tyrants, who would do violence to their Faith, but particularly before all persons of the World, who offend against these sacred Rules by their Actions, by their Words, by their Excess,

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cess, by their Vanities, or otherwise joyn with the Enemies of the Cross, in overthrowing that Law, which they here take upon them to assert and maintain.

Q. I fear too many who come to be Confirm'd, think but very little of this great Obligation which they undertake and of this Spirit by which they are ever afterwards bound to regulate their Lives; and what remedy?

A. This in a great part, depends on those who have others under their Care, as Priests, Parents, Godfathers, Godmothers, and Masters, and therefore it ought to be their business not to permit those who are subject to them, to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, till they have been fully instructed in all the particulars that concern it, in the Dispositions necessary for it, and in all the Effects and Graces to be expected from it.

Q. What time ought Parents, &c. to observe in bringing those under their care to the Sacrament of Confirmation?

A. The proper time is before they have received the Blessed Eucharist, for
I 4 thus

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thus it is required by the Church in her Decrees and Rituals ; and as for their Age, they are allow'd to bring them after they are Seven years old, they being first well instructed according to the capacity of that Age : But because it is scarce to be expected, that at those Years they should be truly sensible of the great Obligations they bring upon themselves, therefore I cannot but think it very proper that all those, who have been admitted to it in that tender Age, would do well, when they are grown up to a better Understanding, to make a solemn Renovation of the Obligations which belong to this Sacrament. The same may be understood of as many others, who have receiv'd it, though in maturity of Age, yet without due Instructions or Knowledge of these Promises and Obligations ; and it may be done after this manner.

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A Form of renewing the Obligation of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

MY Lord God, how prodigious is the Excess of thy Mercy, who not discourag'd by the Ingratitude of Men, pardon'st them those Failings and Sins, which they commit even against the Sacraments, the sacred Pledges of thy Love ! I most humbly beg Pardon for the Unworthiness I brought to the Sacrament of Confirmation, for approaching to it without being fully instructed in its Excellency, or fill'd with a Holy Zeal and Desire of living all my Days according to its Spirit and Sanctity.

Prostrate therefore before thee, I here acknowledge, I have convers'd amongst Christians and thy Children, without due veneration for the sacred Maxims of thy Gospel ; nay, I fear, there has scarce been any Company, wherein I have been engag'd, or Visit I have made, wherein I have not fallen much beneath the Duty
of

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of a Christian, or done something unworthy of that Profession.

But now, my God, I here purpose and resolve to make it my endeavour, for the future, to live as a good and faithful Christian, and being fortified by thy Holy Grace, to appear as a true Soldier of Jesus Christ.

For this end I beg of thee a continual Support of thy Grace, that the World, Company, or Custom may be never able to corrupt me by their pernicious Maxims, that I may have Strength to resist all Shame and Fear, which have so often hinder'd me from speaking and acting courageously in my Duty. Grant me also Grace, my God, that I may suffer in Humility and Silence all the Contradictions, Affronts, and Calumnies I shall meet with. And this one thing more I ask, that I may no longer seek Peace and Rest in the things of this World, but in thy Love only, and the Vigorous Practice of my Duty, as may most contribute to thy Honour.

And having now laid down in short, the principal Points relating to this Sacrament, as likewise to the other two,
such

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such as I hope may be some help for the preventing those Abuses and Contempts which are too ordinarily committed, for want of due Disposition and Instruction, in frequenting these Sacraments ; I hope the whole will be receiv'd with the same Charity as it is writ, and that the Blessing of Heaven will attend those who sincerely make use of it.

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